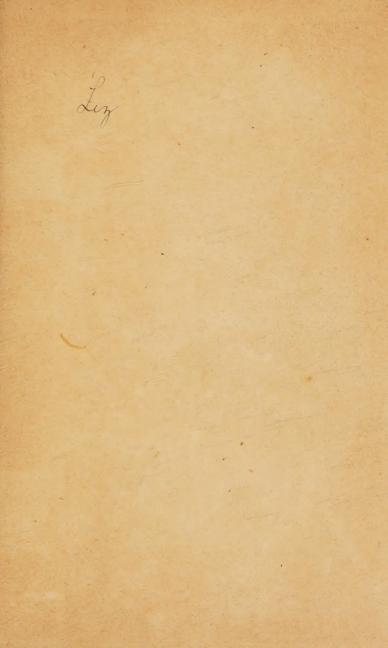
POPE'S ESSAY ON CRITICISM



RYLAND







POPE'S

ESSAY ON CRITICISM

EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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PREFACE

The editor hopes that he has given sufficient information in this little volume to enable students to acquire an adequate knowledge of the meaning, sources, character, and aim of the *Essay on Criticism*. He has tried to keep the Notes of a reasonable length; teachers know, if editors do not, that long and discursive annotations are wholly or in great part neglected by all except the most conscientious. The quotations and references given loosely by Pope himself or his early commentators have been nearly all carefully verified and corrected.

The first three sections of the Introduction are reprinted from the present editor's Rape of the Lock.

PUTNEY, January, 1900.



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INTRODUCTION.

I. LIFE OF POPE.

Alexander Pope, the most illustrious English writer of the first half of the eighteenth century, was the son of another Alexander Pope, a Roman Catholic tradesman living in the City of London. In after-days the poet talked vaguely about his father being "of a gentleman's family in Oxfordshire, the head of which was the Earl of Downe", but his biographers have not been disposed to attach much importance to the assertion. His grandfather (also an Alexander Pope) was apparently a clergyman of the Church of England, and rector of a Hampshire parish. His father, the rector's son, had been placed in an English house of business at Lisbon, where he became a Roman Catholic. By his second wife, Edith Turner, this second Alexander Pope, having now turned linen-draper, became the father of the poet, who was born in Lombard Street, May 21, 1688. Of the poet's childhood little is known, although his half-sister, Mrs. Racket, and other relatives preserved a few anecdotes of his early years. We learn on fair authority that he was originally a plump and healthy child, with a singularly sweet air and voice, and that it was the incessant application with which he studied from the age of twelve upwards that brought about a curvature of his spine and ruined his constitution.

About this time, that is, about the year 1700, the poet's father gave up business and retired into the country. He went to live at Binfield, a village about nine miles from Windsor. There is an old story that he carried with him his savings in

the form of twenty thousand guineas in a chest, and that he refused to invest them in the public funds of the government established by the Revolution. This is false, though it probably rests on some slight basis of truth; for the money was not invested in the funds of the Whig government, but mainly in French securities.

At this time all the grammar-schools were shut against Roman Catholics unless they were willing to forswear their creed. They were forbidden by law to send their children to school out of the country; while at the same time they were unable to send them to educational establishments kept by persons of their own faith in England—since Papists were not allowed to keep school.

If the laws had been stringently carried out, no Roman Catholic could have educated his children except at home. As a matter of fact, the laws were not stringently carried out; but the education of most English Roman Catholics must have been conducted in a somewhat hole-and-corner manner. At any rate Pope's was irregular. He was placed at the age of eight under the care of a priest named, according to Ruffhead, Taverner, or, according to Spence, Banister. Perhaps there were two priests; perhaps Taverner and Banister were one and the same person. In those times, when Roman priests could be imprisoned for life for saying mass, an alias was often a convenience. A year afterwards he was sent to a school of his own religion at Twiford, near Winchester; and later to a school in Marylebone kept by one Deane, who, at the Revolution, had been expelled from his fellowship at Oxford as a non-juror. Here it was that the boy poet composed a tragedy by piecing together speeches from Ogilby's translation of the Iliad and adding connecting verses of his own. This play was performed by his schoolfellows, with the assistance of the gardener. Deane's school seems to have been a very inefficient institution, and Pope was taken home to Binfield apparently when he was about the age of thirteen, and put for a few months under the tuition of

another priest. He told Spence that he practically taught himself Greek, Latin, and French. "I did not follow the grammar; but rather hunted in the authors for a syntax of my own: and then began translating any parts that pleased me particularly, in the best Greek and Latin poets: and by that means formed my taste; which I think, verily, about sixteen was very near as good as it is now." He read much, and with little guidance, in the great English writers. Before the age of twelve, Spenser, Waller, and Dryden had become his favourites.

He was already a poet. In his own often-quoted words:

"As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came".

So correct was his ear that critics have remarked that there is little difference, as far as mere technical use of metre goes, between his earliest and his latest work. Besides the play on the *Iliad* he had about the same time commenced an epic, a "slavish imitation of the ancients", as he afterwards described it. When he was about fourteen or fifteen he wrote his translation of the first book of the *Thebais* of the Latin poet Statius. A revised form of this was published in 1712.

A year or two later (say about 1703 or 1704) Pope made the acquaintance of Wycherley (d. 1715), who, in the second decade of Charles II.'s reign, had dazzled the fashionable world with his brilliant prose comedies. The dramatist was now an old man, and was seeking a fresh reputation as a poet. He entered upon a literary correspondence with the precocious lad, which was continued at intervals until 1710. According to Pope, Wycherley sent his verses to be corrected, and was angry at the extent of the corrections. Modern writers manifest scepticism as to this, but the story is probable enough. By Wycherley, Pope was introduced to another literary luminary, whose ineffectual fire has now hopelessly paled. This was the minor poet Walsh (d. 1708), who had

been described by Dryden as "the best critic in the nation". Pope told Spence that "he used to encourage me much, and used to tell me that there was one way left of excelling; for though we had several great poets, we never had any one great poet that was correct: and he desired me to make that my study and aim". In 1705 young Pope went to stay with this yeteran at his seat in Worcestershire.

The first published works of Pope are contained in the sixth part of the *Poetical Miscellanies*, published in 1709 by Jacob Tonson, the most famous bookseller of the day. These include his *Pastorals*, and his imitations of Ovid's *Epistle from Sappho to Phaon*, of Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale (January and May)*, besides poems and translations by Rowe the dramatist, Swift and Wycherley, and other "eminent hands". Ambrose Philips and Matthew Green contributed pastorals as well as Pope.

Probably no kind of poetry had once so extensive a vogue, and certainly no kind of poetry is nowadays more entirely distasteful. In an age when we are always anxious to apply the touchstone of reality to work of all sorts, we look with wondering pity on the dull, hackneyed make-believe, without passion and without wit, which pleased the age of Anne. Most of it had not even the charm of obvious prettiness and piquancy which renders Watteau and Lancret delightful. Mr. Ruskin does it too much honour when he compares it to "the porcelain shepherds and shepherdesses on a mantelpiece". It was above all trite and artificial; made by rule. and by a bad rule, an imitation of an imitation of an imitation. All this is avowed with complacent candour by our poet in his Discourse on Pastoral Poetry. There is not, I think, in the whole four of Pope's Pastorals a single line which indicates that he ever saw for himself with genuine delight a single flower or bird in the fields about his pretty Berkshire village.

Pope's *Pastorals* had been written, if we may believe him, as early as 1704, and had been handed about in manuscript,

as was the custom of the times, among his literary neighbours and friends. They had been seen by Sir William Trumbull, an old diplomatist and a patron of Dryden, and to him the first was dedicated; also by Henry Cromwell, a man of fashion with literary interests; Lord Halifax, the friend of Prior; Dr. Garth, the author of the *Dispensary*; Congreve the dramatist, and others. Wycherley praised them warmly in his lines *To my Friend Mr. Pope*, which graced the volume in which they appeared. It was generally felt that the young poet had made a good start.

His next venture was the Essay on Criticism, probably written in 1709 when he was twenty, but not published till two years afterwards. It marks a great advance in Pope's art. He had now furnished himself with a subject which suited his genius, and he availed himself of the opportunity with striking effect. The critics were full of praise. Addison, writing in the Spectator at the end of the year, ranked it as a "masterpiece in its kind"; he speaks with emphasis of its originality, elegance, and perspicuity. One writer only had attacked it, John Dennis, a feeble dramatist but a keen critic, who had been himself wantonly singled out for contempt by Pope (Essay on Criticism, lines 585–587). There is, however, no need to speak at greater length of the Essay in this place.

About this time Pope made the acquaintance of his lifelong friend, Martha Blount. The Blounts were an old Roman Catholic family living at Mapledurham, not far from Binfield. The two sisters, who resided with their widowed mother, corresponded with Pope, and he seems to have had a genuine affection for the elder, Martha, to the end of his life. Ill-natured people saw opportunity for scandal in the closer relations which grew up between them towards the close of the poet's life, but probably without reason.

In 1711 Pope wrote by Steele's desire his *Ode for Music* on St. Cecilia's Day. He himself afterwards claimed to have written it in 1708. It does not seem to have been set to

music until 1730, when Maurice Greene set it as an exercise for his degree of Doctor of Music.

Next year (1712) we find Pope contributing to the *Spectator* an imitation of Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*, generally known as the *Pollio*. During the middle ages Virgil's poem had been regarded as an actual prophecy of the coming of Christ, and Pope now strengthened the Messianic character of his original by weaving into his version phrases from the book of Isaiah. Modern readers will feel the poem laboured and unconvincing; the tawdry ornament contrasts ill with the simple earnestness of the *Universal Prayer*, where Pope was expressing religious sentiments which he really felt, instead of writing a poetical exercise. In the same year there appeared his translation of Book i. of the *Thebais* of Statius already mentioned. This was published in the *Miscellany* issued by Lintot, the rival of Tonson.

But Pope's chief contribution to Lintot's Miscellany of 1712 was the Rape of the Lock in its first form, composed in two cantos and making only 334 lines. This delightful poem did not perhaps meet with all the success it deserved; but, if so, applause was only deferred. After its separate publication (1714) in five cantos, with the addition of the fanciful mythology of the sylphs and gnomes, it achieved a popularity which it has never lost, even during the full tide of the Romantic revival. More will be said of Pope's masterpiece in a different section of this Introduction.

The young poet had now made the acquaintance of Addison, Steele, Swift, Gay, and their literary friends. He visited Will's Coffee House, where Dryden had once reigned supreme, and Button's, which Addison set up in 1712 as a meeting-place for the Whig wits, now that party distinctions had become so much emphasized and had brought division and ill-feeling even among literary men. Here he met Ambrose Philips, Budgell, Tickell, Rowe, and the other writers chiefly connected with Addison and the Whigs. But he carefully refrained from committing him-

self to any political party. "You gave me leave once to take the liberty of a friend", writes Addison to him in 1713, "in advising you not to content yourself with one half of the nation for your admirers, when you might command them all. If I might take the freedom to repeat it, I would on this occasion. I think you are very happy to be out of the fray, and I hope all your undertakings will turn to the better account for it." With Addison, Pope was still on very good terms. When the long-expected *Cato* was produced at Drury Lane, in the April of 1713, Pope contributed a prologue to the tragedy.

An early poem called *Windsor Forest* was completed in 1713 and published in the same year. It shows the same vagueness of observation and the same lack of delight in nature as the *Pastorals*. Here and there we get some evidence of an eye for colour; but the poet's interest lies not in the "lawns and op'ning glades", the "hills, vales, and floods", which he is bound to mention, but in the sham mythology, the historical allusions, and the compliments to Queen Anne.

In the same year (1713) Pope contributed six or seven prose essays to the Guardian, Steele's paper, which filled up the gap left by the disappearance of the Spectator. One of them (No. 40, April 27, 1713) is said to have helped bring about the split between Pope and Addison. It is an ironical essay professedly in "continuation of some former papers on the subject of Pastorals", written probably by Tickell, in which Ambrose Philips's efforts were praised and Pope's, although they had appeared in the same Miscellany, passed over in silence. Pope (of course anonymously) writes to clear the author from the charge of partiality; and he does so by saying that Philips has followed better models than Pope. "Mr. Pope has copied Theocritus and Virgil only too faithfully. He introduces Daphnis, Alexis, and Thyrsis on British plains, as Virgil had done before him on the Mantuan: whereas Philips, who hath the strictest regard to

propriety, makes choice of names peculiar to the country, and more agreeable to a reader of delicacy; such as Hobbinol, Lobbin, Cuddy, and Colin Clout." He quotes with mock commendation the feeblest passages from Philips and places them side by side with passages from his own pastorals, remarking: "Our other pastoral writer [i.e. himself], in expressing the same thought, deviates into downright poetry". He gives some lines from a dirge uttered by one of Philips's shepherds, and adds the delightfully ambiguous comment, "I defy the most common reader to repeat them without some motives of compassion". It is said that Steele was so completely deceived that out of consideration for Pope's feelings he showed him the essay and asked him whether he should publish it. Dr. Johnson does not exaggerate when he describes it as "a composition of artifice, criticism, and literature, to which nothing equal will easily be found". As a masterpiece of irony it is worthy to be placed with Swift's Argument to prove that the Abolishing of Christianity may be attended by some Inconveniences. Steele seems to have forgiven the trick played on him, for Pope contributed on several further occasions to the Guardian. But Philips, it is said, as a hint to the writer, hung up a birch at Button's. Another prose effort of Pope's helped to estrange him from Addison. John Dennis, the choleric critic whom Pope had attacked in the Essay on Criticism, wrote an unfavourable pamphlet called Remarks on Cato. Pope rushed into the fray and produced his Narrative of the Frenzy of Mr. John Dennis, an Officer of the Custom House. As he frankly owned in his letter to Addison, the piece was written "not in defence of you, but in contempt of him". Addison at once disowned the stupid and cruel attack on Dennis, and threw Pope overboard without ceremony. He sent "Old Appius" a message, telling him that, "When he [Mr. Addison] thinks fit to take notice of Mr. Dennis's objections to his writings, he will do it in a way Mr. Dennis shall have no just reason to complain of".

We now come to the translation of *Homer*, the work which at the time brought Pope most money and most honour, but which, though still read, is regarded as his least satisfactory achievement. It was begun in 1713, at any rate the Proposals for a translation were issued in the October of that year. Subscriptions soon flowed in. Swift, who had at that time enormous influence, took it up warmly, and threw himself into it with his usual untamable energy. Dr. White Kennet, Bishop of Peterborough, saw him at the Coffee House soon after the Proposals came out, instructing "a young nobleman that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope (a Papist), who had begun a translation of Homer into English verse, for which he must have them all subscribe, 'for', says he, 'the author shall not begin to print till I have a thousand guineas for him". The book was to be published by Lintot in six quarto volumes. There were to be notes and an introduction. The former were chiefly compiled by Broome, Fenton, and Jortin from previous commentators, such as the twelfthcentury Greek critic Archbishop Eustathius of Thessalonica, whose commentaries on Homer had been printed in the sixteenth century. Lord Halifax, formerly Sir Charles Montague, Chancellor of the Exchequer under William III., a nobleman of literary reputation who had befriended Prior and other writers, angled for the dedication of the work. Pope showed his lofty independence when he passed him over and dedicated the Iliad to the retired dramatist Congreve. The first volume, which was anxiously awaited, was issued on June 6, 1715. Pope, according to Johnson's calculation, made £5320 by this translation; but Lintot did badly, owing to the importation of cheap editions printed abroad.

Two days after the publication of the first volume of Pope's *Iliad* a rival translation of Book i. appeared. On the titlepage was the name of Thomas Tickell (1686-1740), a prominent member of Addison's "little senate" at Button's. Addison had puffed his poetical efforts in the *Spectator*, as he did those of others of the set. Pope was annoyed and alarmed when he

heard that Addison was telling his friends that he preferred Tickell's version to Pope's, and learned that Steele and the rest had taken the cue from their leader. He regarded the whole thing as a plot to deprive him of his well-earned fame. At last he persuaded himself that Addison had actually written the translation which passed as Tickell's. Most modern writers regard this suspicion as entirely absurd. Not only Macaulay, but more careful and more impartial writers, such as Mr. Leslie Stephen and Mr. Courthope, come to this conclusion. But the case does not seem so clear as is commonly assumed. Thus in 1721, in his Letter to Congreve prefixed to the second edition of Addison's comedy The Drummer, Steele sneers at Tickell as "the reputed translator of the first book of Homer". And Colley Cibber (one of Pope's many enemies) told Spence that Addison "translated the greater part of the first book of the Iliad published as Tickell's, and put it forth with a design to overset Pope's". If such opinions were held by Pope's opponents, there is surely nothing specially malignant in Pope himself holding them also. It must be remembered that according to Spence, when the subject was introduced in conversation between Mr. Tickell and Mr. Pope by a third person, Tickell did not deny that Addison had written the translation; and Spence holds that this must be regarded as equivalent to a confession that he did. And according to Pope, Young, who knew Tickell well at Oxford, expressed great surprise that Tickell could have been so busied about so considerable a piece of work without his (Young's) knowing of it. The last anecdote, however, rests solely on Pope's statement: and probably the preceding one, so that too much stress should not be laid on them. But one may at any rate say that the general opinion was that Tickell had not written the translation, and that, as Lintot says, there had been "malice and juggle at Button's". But even if these suspicions were quite unfounded, there is no fairness in charging Pope, as Macaulay does, with inventing the story himself.

(M 647)

Pope's *Iliad* survived the faint praises of Addison and his friends. It became the ideal translation of the eighteenth-century critics; "it is certainly the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen", says Dr. Johnson. Even now probably ten times as many copies of Pope's *Homer* are sold as of all the subsequent metrical translations put together. In spite of all the faults that abound in it,—its want of accuracy, its disregard for the spirit of the original, its artificiality, its monotony, and half a dozen others besides,—it retains its hold on the general public.

In 1716 Pope came with his parents to live nearer London than the sylvan retreats of Binfield. He took a house in Mawson's Buildings (now Mawson's Road), situated in Church Lane, Chiswick. Here he completed the *Iliad*, the last volume of which he seems to have finished in 1718, although it was not published till 1720.

The great undertaking had weighed him down. Long afterwards he said, "In the beginning of my translating the *Iliad* I wished anybody would hang me, a hundred times. It sat so heavily on my mind at first that I often used to dream of it, and do sometimes still." But he got into methodical ways of working at it, and would write thirty, forty, and even fifty verses in the morning before he got up, writing on the backs of letters and other spare paper. So at last the whole went to press, and he was free to begin the *Odyssey*.

This was done largely by the pens of Broome and Fenton, who had already assisted in the notes to the *Iliad*. Pope did only twelve books, the others eight and four books respectively, though Pope induced Broome to sign a post-script attributing only three books to himself and two to Fenton. It is practically impossible to distinguish, on internal evidence alone, the portions contributed by each. So thoroughly had Pope set the key that his assistants never deviated from it. By this venture Pope cleared £3500.

In 1717 Pope published his Elegy to the Memory of an (M647)

Unfortunate Lady, which shows more tenderness than is found in any other of his works. His father died next year, and Pope then moved with his mother to Twickenham, where he leased a small house by the river and five acres of ground. The little cottage consisted of "a small hall paved with stone, and two small parlours on each side, the upper story being disposed on the same plan". It has long since disappeared. On the opposite side of the high-road between Teddington and Twickenham lay the plot of ground, which Pope laid out in the new fashion of landscape-gardening. Between the villa and the garden ran a tunnel under the road, and this Pope, in the taste of a retired publican, decorated with looking-glasses, bits of spar, and petrifactions, and converted into a "grotto", of which he seems to have been seriously proud, for he alludes to it frequently in his letters and poems. Here he was visited by Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Peterborough (the eccentric hero of the Spanish war), Swift, Gay, and other friends. He can hardly have been a genial host. "When he wanted to sleep he 'nodded in company', and even slumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry."

The fair blue-stocking, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who had corresponded with him from Constantinople, where her husband was ambassador, came to live at Twickenham in the same year as Pope. In a short time, the exact date cannot be determined, a fierce quarrel broke out between them. According to a doubtful but plausible statement attributed to Lady Mary, "at some ill-chosen time, when she least expected what romances call a declaration, he made such passionate love to her as, in spite of her utmost endeavours to be angry and look grave, provoked an immediate fit of laughter, from which moment he became her implacable enemy". Certain it is, that, beginning in 1728, Pope several times attacked her with the greatest grossness and brutality.

One of Pope's least successful undertakings was his edition

of Shakespeare, which appeared in 1725. In the seventeenth century four editions of Shakespeare appeared, none of them in any sense critical. In 1709-1710 Rowe published the first critical edition, in which some effort was made to get rid of the obvious corruptions of the text. Pope's was the next, and whatever its faults it had the merit of greatly increasing the interest in the plays. Pope, however, knew too little of Elizabethan literature, and was too completely influenced by the standards of his own age, to make a respectable editor. His readings are usually as unsatisfactory as possible. Still, we owe him gratitude for having involuntarily stirred up Lewis Theobald (1688 c.-1744) to undertake the task. This man, a dismal poet but a textual critic of great ability, moved by the deficiencies of Pope, published in 1726 a paniphlet entitled Shakespeare Restored, or a Specimen of the many Errors Committed as well as Unavoided by Mr. Pope in his late Edition, and followed it in due time by his own edition of 1733, the foundation of all subsequent critical work on the text. He suffered martyrdom on account of his temerity, for Pope made him the hero of the Dunciad.

In 1727-8 appeared three volumes of Miscellanies in Prose and Verse, the joint work of Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, and Gay. It consists of burlesques on various literary forms. There are a burlesque literary essay HEPI BAOOTS, or, Of the Art of Sinking in Poetry, Memoirs of P. P. Clerk of this Parish, a parody on the memoirs of Bishop Burnet, both by Pope, together with other things of the same kind. A sort of burlesque club was set afoot by the authors, and with this Scriblerus Club must be connected the design not only of the Dunciad but also of Gulliver; the one a burlesque epic and the other a burlesque set of travels.

The origin of the *Dunciad* can indeed be traced in two ways to Scriblerus, not only as a part of a scheme but as a direct effect of the publication of the *Miscellanics*. In the seventh chapter of his essay on the Bathos, Pope had introduced a number of satirical allusions to contemporary

authors, and, determined that there should be no mistakes in identifying them, added initials. Some of them retorted, and their retorts were made an excuse for the castigation which followed. Professor Courthope considers that the sixth chapter of the *Art of Sinking* was "obviously inserted for the purpose of irritation", after the *Dunciad* had been practically completed, in order to justify its publication. If so, the way that the "dunces" fell into the snare, and rushed into print with abusive pamphlets and satires, must have given Pope the keenest pleasure. He could say with Cromwell, "The Lord hath delivered them into our hands".

The history of the publication of the Dunciad is a very complicated one. For the purpose, doubtless, of arousing interest, Pope indulged in all sorts of mystifications. The first edition was issued in May, 1728; but there were allusions to a (non-existent) previous edition of 1727. Several reprints of this, the first form of the poem, were printed in London and in Dublin. An edition with essay by "Martinus Scriblerus" and other introductory matter (written by Pope himself but attributed to William Cleland), and illustrated by elaborate notes, was issued in 1729 as the "first correct edition". In 1742 he added a fourth book. In 1743 the work appeared in a fresh form, "according to the complete copy found in the year 1742"; the hero no longer Theobald, but Colley Cibber. The dissertation "Of the Hero of the Poem", ironically attributed to Ricardus Aristarchus (i.e. Richard Bentley) but written by Warburton, was added to account for the misconception which had arisen as to the real hero.

This burlesque epic is modelled on Dryden's Mac Flecknoe, but is on a much larger scale. In its final form it consists of over 1750 lines as against Dryden's 217; and there is besides the enormous apparatus of introductory essays, notes, &c. The satire is admirably keen; but the joke is on too gigantic a scale. All this elaborate machinery for crushing the ephemeral writers of the time is felt to be

out of place. And then, the poem is too malevolently cruel. Besides, it is coarse in no common degree; the satire of Pope, like that of Swift, is often as nasty as it is incisive. And of course the whole scheme is absurd, because the more successful Pope's satire is, the less it attains his end. He has, in fact, given us a great *memoria technica* for recalling the nobodies whom he hated, and who but for him would long ago have been forgotten. As Dr. Johnson said of Dryden, "the writer who thinks his works formed for duration, mistakes his interest when he mentions his enemies".

From this wretched work Pope was saved by the intervention of his friend, the brilliant Tory leader, Lord Bolingbroke, who had been exiled by the bitterness of the Whigs in the first flush of their triumph on the accession of King George 1. As Secretary of State he had no doubt been more or less implicated in conspiracies to set aside the Act of Succession and proclaim the Pretender on the death of Anne. The plots, whatever they were, came to nought, and the chief plotter fled. The attainder of Bolingbroke was, however, reversed in 1725, and he was permitted to return to England, though not to take his seat in the House of Lords. He was one of the chief opponents of Walpole, while professing to wish to lead a life of learned leisure in the country. Pope frequently visited him at his house at Dawley, near Uxbridge, where they took part in haymaking, and had beans and bacon and barn-door fowl for dinner. When he was not writing political pamphlets, or making believe to be a farmer, Bolingbroke interested himself in philosophy, and wrote several volumes of superficial and incoherent speculation, which were not published till after his death. He was not deeply learned, nor was he a great thinker. But he was able to give the opinions of the classical moralists, with their names, and the opinions of Spinoza and Leibnitz, as a rule without them; and to express his inconsistent convictions with an air of wit, seriousness, and candour. Pope, as well as Swift, had for him an admiration which seems to us almost inexplicable.

Bolingbroke appears to have supplied Pope with nearly all the raw material for his Essay on Man, and suggestions for the general form of the poems, and the order in which the topics should be treated: even the very illustrations seem to be sometimes due to him. The testimony of Lord Bathurst, reported by Hugh Blair and Joseph Warton, is confirmed by the testimony of Pope himself as related by Spence. The "system", as Pope is pleased to call it, had not much merit. It is an attempt to vindicate the ways of God to man by an appeal to reason; this involves a discussion on man's place in nature, his capacities, rights, and duties. The framework of the argument is supplied from Leibnitz, with occasional assistance from Spinoza. It puts for us with much vigour and clearness the case for what is called optimism, the doctrine that this is the best of all possible worlds. Consistency was not Pope's strong point; but he had a fatal desire to put things effectively and antithetically, and he was driven rather by force of rhetoric than by force of logic to assert that "whatever is, is right", and to imply that free-will, revelations, miracles, and answers to prayer, were all unreal. He probably did not see how deeply he had outraged current religious opinion, but he had his qualms. The four epistles of the Essay on Man were published anonymously in 1733 and the beginning of the next year. For four or five years no serious protest was heard. Then came the two books of De Crousaz, professor at Lausanne, his Examen de l'Essai de M. Pope (1737), and his Commentaire sur la Traduction de l'Essai (1738), in which he accused the poet of "Spinozism" and Fatalism, and showed that his opinions involved the rejection of revealed religion. Crousaz had produced many respectable works on logic, education, and philosophy. Although he was far from a stimulating writer, his attack obtained many readers.

Pope, who, whatever his private opinions may have been, was anxious not to pose as an infidel, was alarmed. But help was at hand; for there came to his assistance Dr. War-

burton, a divine of some note, a bold, energetic man of wide learning and brazen impudence of assertion, who had just delighted the orthodox with the first volumes of his Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated from the Omission of the Doctrine of a Future State of Rewards and Punishments in the Jewish Dispensation. In a series of letters in a monthly review, some republished in a separate form, he defended the poet and earned his ardent gratitude.

In spite of attacks, and of still more damaging defences, the *Essay on Man* became the most popular moral poem ever written. Many translations were made of it into French, German, Italian, and other languages. Voltaire and Marmontel, Wieland and Kant, all paid homage to it. In spite of the somewhat crazy lines of the main structure, the building has conquered our admiration by the beauty and force of its independent parts. Many of the couplets are supreme examples of the art of putting things. Pope had, in a marvellous degree, the ability to present his ideas in a crisp, definite, musical, rememberable way, and other men with less of the gift of utterance have been delighted to embody their dimmer intuitions in his glittering verses.

Meantime Pope had been producing the Moral Essays, and the Satires. The Epistle on Taste, addressed to Lord Burlington (the first of the Moral Essays in order of time, though now numbered IV.), was published on the last day of 1731. The others of this series are on the Characters of Men, addressed to Lord Cobham (1733), on the Use of Riches, to Lord Bathurst (1733), and on the Characters of Women (1735); a fifth, written nearly twenty years earlier and addressed to Addison, was afterwards incorporated. The Satires fall between the years 1733 and 1738. They are now introduced by the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, published in 1735, but this was preceded in order of publication by the imitations of Horace, Satires, ii. I (1733), and ii. 2 (1734). The modernized version of Donne's Satires and of some of Horace's Epistles followed, and the Epilogue to the Satires (One

thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight) completed the

They all showed that Pope's ability for saying unpleasant things in a brilliant manner was greater than ever. He attacked his literary and personal enemies, and many other persons who were neither, with every symptom of unflagging energy and bloodthirsty enjoyment. Cibber and Curll, Addison and Lord Hervey, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the Duke of Chandos, and the Duchess of Marlborough, all came in for their share; and King George himself is held up to contempt in a delightfully ironical imitation of Horace's Epistle to Augustus (ii. 1).

By this time Pope had lost most of his older friends. Mrs. Pope, to whom he was a most tender and devoted son, after years of suffering, died in 1732. Gay also died in 1732; both Arbuthnot and Lord Peterborough in 1735. Bolingbroke had again settled in France. Swift was in Ireland, and was already a stricken man struggling without hope against the inroads of a ter ble disease. Caryll died in 1736. Pope had made a few new friends, amongst them Warburton, Spence, the author of the Anecdotes, and Ralph Allen, who sat not only for the portrait of the Man of Ross, but also for that of Squire Allworthy in Fielding's Tom Jones. Martha Blount still remained, and their friendship became closer as their years advanced.

The poet had kept up a steady correspondence with his friends, and had probably written his letters for years with a view to subsequent publication. During the eighteenth century the letter was a favourite literary form, the plain but comely undress of an age which was too often on parade. Hence we have novels and histories, biographies and travels, philosophies and criticisms told in the shape of epistles from A Person of Quality or A Divine of the Church of England. The essence of the charm lay in the affectation of unstudied ease and careless grace; the writer aimed at being "familiar but not coarse, and elegant but

not ostentatious". Although copies of private letters were handed about, it was of course against the unwritten law for a gentleman to send his correspondence to the press. That would be like appearing at the coffee-house or on the Mall in a dressing-gown and silken night-cap instead of the long-skirted coat and well-curled perruque. Accordingly Pope set himself to carry out a most laborious and intricate scheme in order to get his letters printed without his own consent.

In 1726 Curll, a piratical publisher, having got hold of Pope's letters addressed to Henry Cromwell, printed them, and the publication met with success. Thereupon Pope. professing alarm, began to ask his friends to return to him the letters he had written to them. He had the letters copied, and deposited the originals in Lord Oxford's library. A little later emissaries were secretly sent to Curll, who had just announced that he was about to publish (unauthorized) a Life of Pope, and offered him a quantity of printed sheets of the poet's correspondence. The story told was that a certain enemy of Pope's, called "P. T.", had got hold of it and printed it. Curll at first was suspicious, and communicated with the poet; but Pope put an advertisement in the papers and declared that the thing was a trick, that the letters must be forgeries, and that he should take no further steps in the matter. Curll now proceeded with the publication. Pope, to still further dissociate himself, got some of his friends who were peers to apply to the House of Lords, and induce them to suppress the volume, which was advertised as containing letters from members of the upper house in reply to Pope. At that time it was a serious offence to publish the writings of peers without their consent. Pope knew that no such letters were contained in the volume, and the only effect of the interference was to obtain notoriety for the book, which was of course just what he wanted. A Narrative of the Method by which Mr. Pope's Letters were Procured by Edmund Curll, which quite failed

to explain what it professed to explain, was issued. A sham reward was offered to those who had sold the letters to Curll to induce them to "discover the whole affair", and other steps were taken to excite interest and to disclaim any responsibility for the publication. The volume appeared in the summer of 1735, and was several times reprinted. Pope now came forward and explained that he "thought himself under a necessity to publish such of the said letters as are genuine", and an authorized edition was at last issued in 1737 containing the "genuine" letters. Owing to the discovery of the original copies made by Caryll of the letters sent to him by Pope (which at the latter's request he had returned in 1726), it has been shown that Pope had greatly altered the letters, had sometimes rewritten them, had changed the dates and had even addressed them to other persons better known to the public than those to whom they were actually sent. It can be proved that he did the same with his letters to Wycherley. It is not to be doubted that he treated his correspondence with other of his deceased friends in the same way. The object was achieved. If we are to judge the writer's character by his published letters, "an opinion too favourable", as Dr. Johnson says, "cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness." Pope's letters seem to have been regarded as models until the close of the century.

In 1742, as has been seen, the fourth book of the *Dunciad* was published; and next year the new form of the poem, in which Colley Cibber was made the hero, appeared. A twelvemonth later the "fiery soul" had "fretted the pigmy body to decay"; and the brave, mean, plotting, independent little poet had been laid to rest by the side of his mother in the vault of the red-brick Georgian church of Twickenham.

2. POPE'S PLACE AS A POET.

During the eighteenth century Pope's was regarded as one of the two or three greatest names in English poetry. Warton, in the Essay upon Pope prefixed to his edition of the poet's works, claims for him a place "next to Milton and just above Dryden". Johnson, who represents the highest critical ability of the age, places him in respect to genius below Dryden. But he ranks him very high. With his usual robust common-sense he asks, "If Pope be not a true poet. where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only show the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past: let us enquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed."

But a change was coming. Already, as we see from Johnson's question, people had begun to ask if Pope were a true poet. The answer Johnson supplied was not to be accepted without challenge. Cowper, who did so much to bring about a new standard for poetry, explicitly accepts Johnson's estimate (Letter to Newton, Jan. 5, 1782). He speaks in warm terms of Pope's moral poems, and the technical ability of his work. Yet he feels that his example has been bad.

"But he (his musical finesse was such, So wise his ear, so delicate his touch) Made poetry a mere mechanic art, And every warbler had his tune by heart."

Cowper complains that poetry has no fresh themes, and sighs for a bard who should make evangelical Christianity the subject of his song. For the true poet must have something new to say, he should be a prophet of righteousness; and he must leave the mannered style of the imitators of Pope.

When we come to Wordsworth we find these demands carried further. The poet is a man "endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature and a more comprehensive soul" than other men. He must have a strong imagination, "a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present", an ability of conjuring up in himself representative or ideal emotions. "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity; the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation is gradually produced." "The poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men." I have given this in Wordsworth's own words. But after all it was much more concisely, and almost as adequately, expressed a hundred years before in the dictum of John Dennis, Pope's old enemy. He said: "Poetry is poetry because it is more passionate and sensual than prose. A discourse that is writ in very good numbers, if it wants passion, can be but measured prose." William Lisle Bowles, the clergyman whose Sonnets (1789) helped to awaken the genius of Coleridge, and who was one of the most important of the immediate forerunners of the new school, published in 1806 his Essay on Pope. It was answered by Campbell in his Specimens of the British Poets (1819 and following years), and by Lord Byron in his Letters on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's Strictures on Pope (1821). Bowles argued that the works of nature are more beautiful and sublime than those of art, and therefore are more poetical; and the passions of the human heart which are the

same in all ages are more poetical than artificial manners. Hence "the descriptive poet who paints from an intimate knowledge of external nature is more poetical, supposing the fidelity and execution equal, not than the painter of human passions, but the painter of external circumstances in artificial life; as Cowper paints a morning walk, and Pope a game of cards". He asks Campbell "whether he thinks that the sylph of Pope 'trembling over the froth of a chocolate-pot' be an image as poetical as the delicate and quaint Ariel, who sings 'Where the bee sucks there suck I'?" When Byron laughed at the supposition that imitation of natural objects is always more beautiful than imitation of artificial things, Bowles rejoined that he "spoke not of nature generally, but of images of the sublime and beautiful in nature; and if your Lordship had only kept this circumstance in recollection, you would have seen that your pleasant picture of 'the hog in the high wind', the footman's livery, the Paddington canal and the pigsties, the horsepond, the slop-basin . . . must all go for nothing, for natural as these images might be, they are neither 'sublime nor beautiful'".

Bowles was not a bigot. He arrived at substantially the same conclusion as Byron himself, and as Warton, Pope's first critical editor. "On the subject of Pope's poetical character", he says to the author of *Childe Harold*, "we agree. You say he is inferior to Milton and Shakespeare. This is all I ask." (*Two Letters to Lord Byron*, 1821.)

It is because Pope is wanting in the faculty of sensuous imagination, "the vision and the faculty divine", and in a loving knowledge of the deeper and worthier aspects of human nature, that he can never take a place side by side with Shakespeare or Milton or Wordsworth. But he is also deficient in noble emotion. The bard who sang that "the proper study of mankind is man", cared little for the concrete man—the normal types which appeal to Chaucer, Shakespeare, Wordsworth. Love occupies a less place in

Pope than in any other great poet. True human sympathy and pity we very seldom find in his poems, and scarcely ever without some taint of artificiality. Once only do we encounter a burst of genuine religious feeling, I mean of course in the beautiful *Universal Prayer*. Fierce scorn and eager hatred we see, alas! everywhere; but there is no grandeur in his contempt or in his bitterness. Like the rest of the school from Dryden to Gifford, he has but little interest in the sights and sounds of nature. Once or twice, in *Windsor Forest*, he shows more sensibility to colour than the majority of his school.

One of the very best of recent "appreciations" of Pope will be found in the charming lines of Mr. Austin Dobson:

" POPE was most of all Akin to Horace, Persius, Juvenal; POPE was like them the Censor of his Age, An Age more suited to Repose than Rage; When Rhyming turn'd from Freedom to the Schools. And, shock'd with Licence, shudder'd into Rules: When Phoebus touch'd the Poet's trembling Ear With one supreme commandment, Be thou Clear: When Thought meant less to reason than compile. And the Muse labour'd chiefly with the File. Beneath full Wigs no Lyric drew its Breath As in the Days of great ELIZABETH: And to the Bards of ANNA was denied The Note that Wordsworth heard on Duddon-side. But POPE took up his Parable and knit The Woof of Wisdom with the Warp of Wit; He trimm'd the Measure on its equal Feet, And smooth'd and fitted till the Line was neat.

Suppose you say your worst of POPE, declare His Jewels Paste, his Nature a Parterre, His Art but Artifice—I ask no more: Where have you seen such Artifice before? Where have you seen a Parterre better grac'd Or Gems that glitter like his Gems of Paste? Where can you show, among your Names of Note, So much to copy and so much to quote?

And where, in Fine, in all our English Verse, A Style more Trenchant and a Sense more terse? So I, that love the old Augustan Days Of formal Courtesies and formal Phrase; That like along the finished Line to feel The Ruffle's flutter and the Flash of Steel; That like my Couplet as compact as clear; That like my Satire sparkling tho' severe, Unmix'd with Bathos and unmarr'd by Trope, I fling my Cap for Polish—and for POPE."

3. POPE'S STYLE.

In the eighteenth century probably Pope's chief claim on the admiration of the literary public lay in the perfection of his technique. The bitter Dennis and other enemies sometimes laughed at him for bad workmanship, but the charge was felt to be absurd. Even the later men who had shaken themselves free from his spell, acknowledged his supreme technical ability. Thus Bowles admits that, "in execution, I think no poet was ever superior to Pope".

Pope's style is the culmination of that which was introduced about the time of the Restoration by Waller and Dryden. The use of the heroic couplet, with a pause at the end of every line, and a more or less definite conclusion of the sense at the end of the couplet, was its most distinguishing feature. Those devices which had rendered the heroic couplets of Chaucer so flexible and sweet were rejected. The running on of the sense without pause from one line to another, and from one couplet to another (called by the French enjambement), is carefully avoided. The couplet is never split. The rhyme is scarcely ever double; the line must end with a clearly emphasized syllable. The movement is always severely iambic.

Let us compare the following passage from *Nun's Priest's Tale*, which I have opened on by accident, with any passage of Pope we please.

"O falsë mordrour lurkynge in thy den! O newë Scariot, newë Genyloun" Falsë disymulour, O Greek Synoun,
That broghtest Troye al outrëly to sorwë!
O Chauntëcleer, acursëd be that morwë,
That thou into that yerd flaugh fro the bemës!
Thou were ful wel y-warnëd by thy dremës
That thilkë day was perilous to thee;
But what that God forwoot most nedës bee,
After the opinioun of certein clerkis."

Here we see that there is an eleventh syllable and that the rhymes are therefore double in three cases (five lines out of ten), sorwë-morwë, bemës-dremës, clerkis; and that not in a single case is the rhyming syllable a particularly clear and definite sound capable of bearing a very strong accent: you cannot stress very strongly the last syllables of lines 2 and 3 or of 8 and 9. Again, the passage begins with the second half of a couplet, and ends with the first half of a couplet. Then, although the first line scans quite accurately, the real run of the verse tends to become trochaic,

O | fa'lsë | mor'drour | lur'kynge | in' thy | den',

because of the three dissyllabic words accented on the first syllable that come so early in it. The cæsura, or medial pause, occurs after the third foot in lines 3, 6, 7, 10.

Now take a passage from Pope's Essay on Man.

"All are but parts of one tremendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That changed through all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart."

I have chosen this because it is more flexible than some of Pope's verse; for we have here the frequent use of a trochee for the first foot instead of an iambus. But every line is endstopped. Every couplet is complete in itself. The sense in one instance only is carried through from one couplet to another, but even there (between lines 6 and 7) a pause is not only possible but necessary, and each couplet has an isolated existence of its own. The rhymes are all monosyllabic; and they are all strong endings on which a full emphasis can fall. Each couplet therefore closes with a kind of snap. The cæsura occurs in every case at the end of the second foot, or else in the middle of the next foot, except in line 2. Hence the line becomes divided into two approximately equal halves, with a tendency to balance against each other. The opposition is strengthened by verbal antithesis; and we constantly find a second half-line opposed to the first.

Few critics of Pope seem to suspect how much of his characteristic hardness and brilliance depends on the rigidity and isolation of his couplets. If we break the couplets into halves, a new tone is heard. Look at these two lines:

"Entangle Justice in her net of Law, And Right, too rigid, hardens into wrong".

The melody is that of Tennyson's blank verse. But put them into their places in two couplets and Pope stands confessed:

"In vain thy reason finer webs shall draw, Entangle Justice in her net of Law, And Right, too rigid, hardens into wrong; Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong'.

After the Romantic revival had set in, poets of the first rank at first avoided the heroic couplet, because it had grown so inflexible. Keats showed how it could be restored to the easy trailing sweetness of Chaucer. He adopts the same expedients as his mediæval master and adds others; for instance, he frequently breaks off a sentence in the middle of a line.

Look at this from the first Book of *Endymion*, and see (M 647)

how Keats has regained the "first fine careless rapture" of Chaucer's verse, with an added sweetness of his own.

"Hereat Peona, in their silver source,
Shut her pure sorrow-drops with glad exclaim,
And took a lute, from which there pulsing came
A lively prelude, fashioning the way
In which her voice should wander. 'Twas a lay
More subtle-cadenced, more forest wild
Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child;
And nothing since has floated in the air
So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare
Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand."

William Morris and other moderns who have followed him have imitated Keats and Keats's master.

Pope even avoids the *triplet* by which Dryden had sought to gain a greater flexibility to his verse, and to mitigate its monotony. In the later poems Pope uses it scarcely at all; in the *Homer* somewhat more frequently, though still very seldom. Thus in the first five books of the *Iliad* we have altogether only thirteen instances of its use in 4184 lines. In the *Rape of the Lock* there is not a single triplet. Oddly enough, the *Essay on Criticism*, written only two or three years before, contains a relatively larger number than any other of his poems; eight in 744 lines, a proportion more than four times greater than in Books i.-v. of the *Iliad*.

But it is the excessive use of antithesis and balance that more than anything else gives its character to Pope's verse. There is no need to give an example. It runs all through his work. In his poems we have the same artificial opposition as in the formal garden of the age:

"His gardens next your admiration call, On every side you look, behold the wall! No pleasing intricacies intervene, No artful wildness to perplex the scene; Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother, And half the platform just reflects the other".

He ridicules the rigid formalism and undeviating balance of

design in horticulture, but never sees that similar objections can be brought against them in poetry. In his verses "half the platform just reflects the other", as in the symmetrical Renascence architecture of Blenheim and Canons.

The combination of antithesis and balance, when concise, becomes epigram. Pope's writing is full of epigram; halftruths, which are sometimes more misleading than whole falsehoods, couched in the most unqualified and unconditional fashion. He loves the hard sparkle of telling phrases, without a modifying adverb. The soft glow which comes from moderation, accuracy, and fulness of statement has no attraction for him. In this he resembles many of the great writers of the age. Their logic was the purely abstract logic of the academic class-room. They applied the so-called Laws of Thought direct to the phenomena of experience, and the result was a narrow consistency which tried to understand half the facts of life by ignoring the rest. Their formal logic taught that a subject cannot both have, and not have, a given predicate; that X cannot both be, and not be, Y; whereas we know that in the actual world X is very probably both Y and not-Y, it is Y in one sense and not-Y in another sense, Y in one set of conditions and not-Y in another. The phenomena of the human mind and of human society cannot be treated like the abstract triangles and circles of geometry. But Pope, like Hume and Gibbon, tries to deal with them in the same way. He assumes that the current classifications of mental states and of social qualities are as conformable to the rigid requirements of formal logic as those of Euclid. Here is an example. He says:

"What makes all physical or moral ill?
There deviates Nature, and here wanders Will".

But physical and moral ill are not absolutely exclusive, nor are Nature and Will; and the two pairs of opposites do not exactly correspond. We have all the elements of epigram at the expense of truth.

Pope was of course a believer in what is called poetical diction. In his time it was universally accepted as a canon of criticism that a special vocabulary, neither too familiar nor too technical, was necessary for a poet; there must be, as Johnson puts it, "a system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestic use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts". He therefore uses laborious paraphrases to avoid the mention of what seems common and unclean to the dainty Muse of the Augustan age. This habit is most irritating in the *Iliad* when he is translating a poet of such simplicity and directness of style as Homer. He uses absurd paraphrases to avoid a commonplace word. Thus when he wants to say that two pigs were killed for dinner he puts it thus:

"Of two his cutlass launched the spurting blood".

"Cutlass" sounds more "poetical" than knife. But it is seen in other poems, for instance the *Rape of the Lock*. Here it often adds delightfully to the mock-heroic air—thus "shining altars of Japan" for lacquered trays, "a two-edged weapon from her shining case" for scissors, and "the velvet plain" for the card-table, the "circled green" for the fairy-ring in the grass.

Desirous to avoid all new and unauthentic words, he does not employ those piquant compound words of which nearly all the great poets are so fond. You may look through Pope in vain for such coinages as those of Shakespeare, Milton, and Tennyson. What charms them would horrify him! As a rule only accepted compounds are employed by him.

Pope uses metaphors much less frequently than the great imaginative poets. He prefers simile. One of the chief characteristics of romantic poetry is the use of many and unusual metaphors, the frequent suggestion of a somewhat undefined and unexpected likeness instead of the formal assertion of a more clearly determined likeness. Thus Shakespeare and the other Elizabethans pile metaphor on

metaphor with careless profusion, regardless of the incoherence and want of precision which results. Here is a passage taken absolutely at random from Shelley's Prometheus Unbound:

"And meanwhile
In mild variety the seasons mild
With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds
And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,
And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild
Shall clothe the forests and the fields".

All the italicized words are obviously metaphorical, and there are others where the metaphor is less noticeable because more familiar. There is nothing unusual in this; it is quite a typical passage. If it is compared with characteristic passages of Pope, a marked difference will be observed. My copy of Pope opens at the last page of Canto iii. of the *Rape of the Lock*; let the student compare lines 161 to the end with this outburst of Shelley's. There is one metaphor, but it is trite and familiar: *Time spares*. Of course nothing can be proved by single passages; but the student will find that the statement is generally true.

Let us take a piece from the prose translation of the *Iliad* by Messrs. Lang, Leaf, and Myers, and compare it with Pope's. Opening at random at the beginning of Book xx., we read as follows:—

"So by the beaked ships around thee, son of Peleus, hungry for war, the Achaians armed; and over against them the men of Troy, upon the swelling of the plain. But Zeus bade Themis call the gods to council from many-folded Olympus' brow; and she ranged all about, and bade them to the house of Zeus. There was no River came not up, save only Ocean, nor any nymph, of all that haunt fair thickets and springs of rivers and grassy water-meadows. And they came to the house of Zeus who gathereth the clouds, and sat them down in the polished colonnades which Hephaistos in the cunning of his heart had wrought for father Zeus. Thus gathered they within the doors of Zeus; nor was

the earthshaker heedless of the goddess' call, but from the salt sea came up after the rest, and set him in the midst, and inquired concerning the purpose of Zeus: 'Wherefore, O Lord of the bright lightning, hast thou called the gods again to council? Say, ponderest thou somewhat concerning the Trojans and Achaians? for lo, the war and the fighting of them are kindled very nigh.'"

This passage, which is almost as simple and direct as a passage from the historical books of the Old Testament, appears in Pope's translation in the following form:—

"Thus round Pelides, breathing war and blood, Greece, sheath'd in arms, beside her vessels stood: While near impending from a neighbouring height, Troy's black battalions wait the shock of fight. Then Jove to Themis gives command, to call The gods to council in the starry hall: Swift o'er Olympus' hundred hills she flies, And summons all the senate of the skies. These shining on, in long procession come To Jove's eternal, adamantine dome. Not one was absent, not a rural pow'r That haunts the verdant gloom or rosy bow'r. Each fair-haired Dryad of the shady wood. Each azure sister of the silver flood: All but old Ocean, hoary sire! who keeps His ancient seat beneath the sacred deeps. On marble thrones, with lucid columns crown'd (The work of Vulcan), sat the pow'rs around, Ev'n he whose trident sways the wat'ry reign, Heard the loud summons and forsook the main. Assum'd his throne amid the bright abodes, And question'd thus the Sire of men and gods: 'What moves the God who heav'n and earth commands, And grasps the thunder in His awful hands. Thus to convene the whole æthereal state? Is Greece and Troy the subject of debate? Already met, the low'ring hosts appear, And death stands ardent on the edge of war."

There is no denying that in a sense Pope's verse is musical. Its melody, it may be, is thin and conventional compared with that of some of the great masters before and

since: but it is real. There is a charm in sweet monotony, as well as in the incisive and insistent melody which seizes upon our ear and our heart. And Pope has the former, though it often seems poor compared with later work, as Bellini's tunes seem poor by the side of Schumann's. At his best Pope, too, has something of soul-compelling melody, as, for instance, in the famous passage in the Elegy to an Unfortunate Lady, lines 51-68, or the concluding portion of the First Epistle of the Essay on Man. But he is undoubtedly monotonous. Dr. Johnson will not listen to this objection with patience. It is "the cant of those who judge by principles rather than perception". The truth is that the eighteenth-century critics had lost the power of appreciating the more piquant forms of melody, just like the Italian musicians of the age of Bellini. They mistook smoothness for beauty. The one thing needful was to avoid any approach to a break, or a discord. If this were done, nothing more could be required. Those subtle cadences which we find in poets of the Elizabethan period and of the present century, would have had no charm for Johnson, nor for Pope. They would have been more pained by an uncommon word, an ungrammatical or awkward expression, a want of definite accent, than charmed by the unconventional witchery of the whole effect

Pope's mastery of the more refined resources of rhythmical effect is admirably shown in the well-known passage in the Essay on Criticism (lines 364-381), which Dr. Johnson, with his characteristic insensitiveness of ear, made the occasion for an attack. The critic rejected the advice of the poet that the "sound should seem an echo to the sense", and asserted that "beauties of this kind are commonly fancied; and when real are technical and nugatory, not to be rejected and not to be solicited". The use of short or long vowels, of liquid or sibilant or guttural consonants, and similar devices does, however, modify considerably the character of the verse; and it is of course an entirely legitimate device in order to

assist in producing suggestions of different kinds. Every attentive reader of Tennyson knows this too well to make any further remarks necessary.

Pope's rhymes deserve a few moments of consideration. The student will be struck with the large number of imperfect assonances, and he will be apt to put these all down to carelessness. But further inquiry will show him that many of these are really due to the fact that our pronunciation has greatly shifted since Pope's day. The English vowels in that day had not proceeded quite so far in the course of degradation, which has made our vowel-symbols stand for sounds entirely different from those which they represent in all the Continental languages. The combinations ea, ee, and ei for the most part represented the long Continental e (the French é). The Irish peasant, unless he has been perverted by elementary schoolmasters, still pronounces them in this fashion. We only retain the old sounds in the words great and an approach to it in pear. E followed by a consonant and another mute e is also pronounced in this way. Thus Pope rhymes complete with great, take with speak.

The symbol a (especially in combination with i, or when indicated as long by the mute e at the end of the word) had, however, come to have the same sound as it still hac. Thus we get such rhymes as these in the Rape of the Lock—carewere, care-hair, hair-sphere, hair-ear, appear-ear, all doubtless having the same vowel sound which we still use in were but have exchanged in sphere and ear for the Continental long i.

This Continental pronunciation of i is perhaps preserved by Pope in the words light, delight, night, &c., which he rhymes (perhaps in any case imperfectly) with wit. The late E. A. Freeman, the historian, remarked that in his youth old-fashioned people still pronounced oblige as obleege. Perhaps in these words the i was still pronounced as we pronounce it in wind and as we do not pronounce it in kind. Half a century later, Dr. Johnson, when asked as to how wind should be

pronounced, said "he could not find it in his mind to call it wind". Wind had become an exception; and indeed most of our so-called long i's have become, like the German ei, a diphthongal sound, in which the voice slides from Continental a to Continental i (ah to ce). This had begun before Pope's time, and most long i s were pronounced as we now pronounce them. With long i (=ei) he regularly rhymes oi. Thus in the Essay on Criticism we have join-line (lines 46-47).

After making all proper allowance we notice many cases of very loose rhymes in Pope, which show that the "troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming" was a source of difficulty to the poet. Thus in the Essay on Criticism and the Rape of the Lock we have appear-regular, safe-laugh, mast-placed, air-star, remain'd-land, esteem-them, worn-turn, showed-trod, full-rule, foot-dull, and many more imperfect rhymes which cannot be defended on any consistent system of explanation. The student should notice rows-doux in i. 137-38. Again, unintended assonance is as unpleasant to a delicate ear as imperfect assonance. But Pope frequently neglects this truth, with the inevitable effect. As far as possible a poet should avoid repeating the same vowel sound, or even similar vowel sounds, in adjacent rhymes. Instances will be found in the Rape of the Lock, Canto iv. 61-70, Canto v. 73-78, 79-82, 99-102. In lines 15-28 of the same Canto the rhymes are pains-gains, grace-face, day-away, produce-use, saint-paint, decay-grey, fade-maid; that is, of seven rhymes occurring in succession six have the same vowel; of these, two are exactly the same pure vowel rhymes, and two more are almost the same, differing only by the presence and absence of a final s.

Such laxity seems strange in a poet who was regarded until our own time as a master of technique. Byron calls him "the most faultless of poets". And, as we have seen, Cowper, Bowles, and others who have disputed his supremacy in other matters have allowed it in this. Yet he per-

mits himself a licence in these matters of rhyme which no living poet, even of the second rank, would for a moment tolerate, and which Tennyson, and even Browning, who was no stickler for ceremony, would have equally rejected.

4. THE ESSAY ON CRITICISM

The Essay on Criticism was published anonymously in May, 1711. According to the poet's own testimony in the edition of his works published in 1717, he wrote the Essay in 1709. In his later life he claimed a somewhat earlier date for it. He told Ionathan Richardson, a collector of literary gossip, who must not be confused with the great novelist, that he wrote it in 1707, and said the date 1709 was put in 1717 by mistake. But the date 1709 was given in every edition of his works until 1743, the year before he died. He told Spence that he showed Walsh the Essay in 1706, the year before Walsh died. As "the Muse's judge and friend" did not die till 1708, Mr. Courthope thinks this is a slip for 1707. In the first issue of his Letters published in 1735 (the "unauthorized" edition, put forth by Curll) a note appears, which runs in some copies: "Mr. Walsh died at 49 years old in the year 1708. The year after Mr. Pope wrote the Essay on Criticism." In other copies it runs: "Mr. Walsh died in 1708, the year after Mr. Pope wrote the Essay on Criticism". This certainly looks like "studied ambiguity", as Mr. Courthope says. In the authoritative commentary of Warburton, added to the Essay in the edition of 1743, we are told that "it was the work of an author who had not attained to the twentieth year of his age"-that is, it was written before May, 1708. But the other date (1709) remained as well.

This kind of mystification is a familiar fact in Pope's biography. He was secretive and untruthful. He loved to pose, and he loved to deceive. It was said of him that he played the politician about cabbages and turnips, and that he could

not drink tea without a stratagem. In the words of Professor Courthope: "Being anxious to obtain a reputation for precocity, he antedated the composition of the *Essay*; but he left a line of retreat open to himself, in case of need, by adopting, in the professedly spurious edition of his *Correspondence*, the variety of punctuation above described".

We may safely assume that the date originally given is the correct one, and that the poem was written in 1709, when he was twenty-one. It was "written fast", as he told Spence; "for he had digested all the matter in prose before he began upon it in verse". According to the ridiculous literary affectation of the day, he professed to be unwilling to publish it, and resisted the entreaties of Trumbull and others until 1711. At first it created no special interest. Pope told Carvll he expected a slow sale. "Jonson's printer told me he drew off a 1000 copies in his first impression, and I fancy a treatise of this nature, which not one gentleman in threescore, even of liberal education, can understand, will hardly exceed the vent [sale] of that number." Accordingly Pope had twenty presentation copies sent to "several great men", such as George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, one of the feeblest poetasters of the age of Anne, and John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, whom he had quoted and praised in the concluding part of the poem (ll. 723-4). John Dennis, the critic and dramatist, who had been wantonly attacked in the Essay, replied with a pamphlet called Reflections, Critical and Satirical, upon a late Rhapsody, called an Essay upon Criticism (June, 1711), in which he made a brutal attack on the personal appearance and the moral character of the young poet.1 But the attack fell flat, no curiosity about the poem was aroused; and it was not until Addison wrote a eulogistic notice in the Spectator (Dec. 20, 1711) that the Essay seems to have made much stir. Even with this fillip, the sale during the first year was slow.

In his favourable account of Pope's Essay in the Spectator

1 See Appendix II to this volume.

(No. 253) Addison remarks that "the observations follow one another like those in Horace's *Art of Poetry*, without that methodical regularity which would have been requisite in a prose writer". This is not quite fair to Pope.

He has more method, at least more parade of method, than his great predecessor. Warburton indeed claims that the poem is a regular and complete treatise on the art of poetry. But this is only an instance of the shameless exaggeration of "the most impudent man living". The framework is fairly regular and fairly comprehensive, but the arrangement of material within it is often loose and inconsequent. It is one thing to lay down a logical scheme, another to keep to it. There is a plan, and a good plan; but many of what an eighteenth-century critic would call "the particular observations" would appear just as appropriately in any other part of the poem as in the position they actually occupy. The best couplets have often very little to do with the specific point they are supposed to enforce. In all probability the piece was composed in much the same way as we have good cause to believe the Essay on Man was composed, by jotting down fragmentary passages, and piecing them together afterwards. "I have", says Pope, writing to Caryll in December, 1730, "many fragments which I am beginning to put together." These fragments, there is every reason to think, became the Essay on Man, the first part of which was published about two years later. That the result is not merely "a glaring chaos and wild heap of wit" speaks well for the constructive instinct of the poet. In the Essay on Criticism this architectonic ability is much more marked than in the ethical poem of twenty years later.

No claim to originality can, of course, be substantiated; nor indeed has any such claim been advanced. Pope is far more anxious to claim the authority of his great predecessors than to assert his independence of them. From Horace, Vida, and Boileau he got nearly every-

thing in the *Essay* that is worth having, and he owns further obligations to Cicero, Quintilian, Dryden, and other critics. The poem, as many writers have remarked, is a cento of quotations. But Pope's examples and illustrations are, necessarily, mainly his own.

The predecessors of Pope's Essay to whom he is indebted for the general idea of the poem, for most of the precepts, and for some of the illustrations, must be briefly mentioned. He has himself given us a brief sketch of the history of criticism in ll. 643 to the end. There is no need to mention the prose writers, so that we may begin with Horace's Epistle to the Pisos (Epistola ad Pisones). generally known as the Ars Poetica. This was written about a dozen years before the Christian era, and is a charming example of the mingled sense and fun we are accustomed to find in Horace, together with admirable critical remarks. Horace's practical suggestions are of this kind: Be consistent with yourself, with nature, with literary custom; don't imitate unless you are obliged, but be original in small matters; don't be pretentious; select your material; don't introduce "purple patches" without regard to their appropriateness; be correct; be concise. And so on. Most of the poem, it should be noticed, deals with dramatic work, which Pope hardly alludes to. It is interesting to note that while Pope forgets that we may have truth to nature without correctness. Horace sees it distinctly. He tells us that the play which copies human life may be more successful, at any rate more popular, than one which is merely correct.

"Look, too, to life and manners as they lie
Before you: these will living words supply.
A play devoid of beauty, strength, and art,
So but the thoughts and morals suit each part,
Will catch men's minds, and rivet them when caught,
More than the clink of verses without thought."

(Conington's trans.)

The next is the Ars Poetica of Marco Girolamo Vida, who

died Bishop of Alba in 1566. It was published in 1527, and dedicated to the dauphin Francis, who was at the time a prisoner as a hostage for his father, Francis I, at the court of Spain. This is a much larger and more systematic work than Horace's, consisting of three books of about six hundred lines apiece.

Vida's first book is principally taken up by a short history of poetry, which practically resolves itself into a noble panegyric on Homer and on Virgil, and an account of the education of the poet full of interesting details—for instance, a strong protest against the brutal methods of education which shocked so many of the best minds of the Renascence.

"Ponite crudeles iras et flagra, magistri, Foeda ministeria, atque minis absistite acerbis."

Then follows a glorification of poets and poetry, with which the book concludes. The second book lays down rules for the writing of an epic. There must be a general and vague statement of the subject-matter, and an invocation of some celestial power, especially of the Muses; you must not begin in the beginning, but in the middle of events; you must beware of divulging the catastrophe and issue of the story, but, on the contrary, must keep your reader in suspense. As a rule avoid digressions, and such elaboration of description as obscures the general drift of the poem. At the same time variety is charming, and, managed with perfect art, such digressions are delightful. The poet may sometimes illustrate great things by little, but he must shun comparisons which are too low. Avoid unnecessary repetition. Do not choose too large a field. Sometimes the flow of inspiration carries all before it; but judgment and labour must hold it in check. Follow nature. Let your characters be true to life, and let them be distinct; words and actions alike must be suitable. Do not dwell on what is immodest, if it is necessary to allude to it. The book concludes with a complimentary passage on Pope Leo X, whose kinsman Clement VII was the reigning pontiff. The third and last book deals with style and language. Above all, says Vida, keep clear of obscurity. Variety of beautiful images is to be sought. He discusses the use of such as can be furnished by metaphor and simile, by hyperbole, metonymy, apostrophe, and the other devices of rhetoric—the so-called figures of speech. He urges the young poets "to strip the ancients and divide the spoils"; but some degree of originality is necessary. You may occasionally introduce a new word or revive an old; but avoid long compounds, and ugly and barbarous names.

"Let things submit to words on no pretence, But make your words subservient to your sense."

The poet gives instances of representative metre, as Pope does, but at much greater length than his English imitator. Vida seems to have been the first to lay down such rules and illustrate them by his example. The poet is not to publish until he has corrected his piece again and again, has laid it aside for a time, and has taken the advice of his friends upon it. Vida's poem concludes with a panegyric of Virgil, the glory of Italy, his own model and source of inspiration.

The fame of Vida was exaggerated in his own age and that which immediately succeeded. J. C. Scaliger says he was regarded as the first poet of his age; and another critic describes him as "sublime", a curiously inappropriate epithet. Pope probably revived the taste in England, but towards the end of the century he was, it would seem, almost as much neglected as now.

The third famous poem to which Pope is indebted is L'Art Poétique of Nicolas Boileau-Despreaux (d. 1711). He was the greatest champion of the French classical revival of the seventeenth century. He translated Longinus, and wrote a number of critical works in prose. A master of brevity, clearness, and force, he curbed the ex-

travagances of the would-be romantic school and the tasteless conceits of the salons. He is sometimes blamed as though he destroyed poetry, much as Cervantes is said to have destroyed chivalry. But it was only the grotesque excesses of second-rate men that he attacked. If there had been any great poet of the first rank in France he could not have been suppressed by Boileau. L'Art Poétique, which was published in 1674, when the author was 38, is in four cantos. Everything that could be said on these lines had already been said by Horace and Vida, and Boileau merely puts into admirably clear and vivacious couplets the commonplaces of criticism to be found in his two forerunners. But he is briefer, and on the whole less systematic, than the Renascence poet; his style is more epigrammatic and Horatian.

Boileau devotes his first canto to general advice. He lays stress on good sense:

"Quelque sujet qu'on traite, ou plaisant, ou sublime, Que toujours le bon sens s'accorde avec la rime".

He tells us to avoid lengthy and excessive detail, too great uniformity of style, vulgarity, and bombast. He traces the history of French poetry to Malherbe, and then resumes his practical advice. Be clear; avoid barbarisms of diction; never work in a hurry; correct without ceasing.

"Polissez-le sans cesse et le repolissez; Ajoutez quelquefois, et souvent effacez."

Be a severe critic of your own work, and follow the advice of friends who find fault. In canto ii the author deals with specific types, e.g. pastoral, elegy, ode, satire. The great champion of the correct school protests with emphasis against tameness and coldness on the one hand, and the tendency to ceaseless epigram on the other. Canto iii deals with tragedy and comedy and with epic poetry. In regard to tragedy, he warns us against the errors of the

romantic school of his day; in regard to epic poetry, he makes an attack on the use of supernatural machinery in modern poems, in spite of Tasso, of whom he speaks, and of Dante and Milton, whom he ignores. Canto iv returns to the subject of the correction and polishing of one's work. He pleads for morality and purity in song. He tells the story of poetry from the savage times before civilization, through the great Greeks, and then goes on to speak of Corneille, and Racine, and other writers of the age of Louis XIV.

There is no need to do much more than just name those English predecessors of Pope, to whom he owes most. Putting aside the prose writers—an important English omission, since Pope was a diligent student of Predecessors. the admirable critical prefaces of Dryden, and owed much to them—we have (I) the Essay on Satire and Essay on Poetry of John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave at a later period and Duke of Buckinghamshire, the former circulated in MS. in 1679, if not earlier, the latter printed in 1682.

- (2) The Essay on Translated Verse, and the translation of Horace's Ars Poetica by Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, published in the closing years of Charles II's reign.
- (3) Essay upon Unnatural Flights in Poetry, published in 1700 by George Granville, afterwards created Earl of Lansdowne.

In his admirable life of Pope Mr. Courthope makes an interesting attempt to defend Pope from the charges of inconsistency and incoherence. "Everything in the Essay turns on this fundamental idea of Nature, and three main principles underlie Pope's reasoning: (1) that all sound judgment and true 'wit' is founded on the observation of Nature; (2) that false 'wit' arises from a disregard of Nature and an excessive affection for the conceptions of the mind; (3) that the true standard for determining what is 'natural' in poetry is to be found in the best works of the ancients" (p. 49). When, however, Mr. Court-

hope comes to detailed exposition of what is meant by "Nature" he is less convincing. He maintains that Pope "consciously or unconsciously opposed it to those metaphysical ideas of nature which had prevailed since the philosophy of Aristotle was transformed into the philosophy of Aquinas. Pope uses the word in the sense in which Shakespeare uses it in Hamlet when he speaks of 'holding the mirror up to nature', and as Bacon uses it in the first aphorism of the Novum Organum: 'Man, as the minister and interpreter [of Nature], does and understands as much as his observations on the order of nature, either with regard to things or the mind, permit him, and neither knows nor is capable of more'" (pp. 49-50). This attempt to explain what Pope meant by Nature seems to be somewhat lacking in precision. To begin with, it is not at all clear that Shakespeare and Bacon, in the two passages quoted, mean by Nature exactly the same thing. A reference to the passage at the beginning of Hamlet, act iii, sc. 2, will show that the dramatist is thinking of what we may call the spontaneous normal movements of emotional expression. An actor is neither to be too exaggerated nor too tame; he is to be natural, and not to substitute conventional gestures of the stage for the instinctive and ordinary gestures of actual life. On the other hand, the philosopher, if we may accept Mr. Courthope's reading of a very ambiguous form of words, is thinking of objective Nature, the vast complex of phenomena, put in antithesis to the thoughts of man about it, but revealed by external perception and by introspection. This great system cannot be understood, says Bacon, by contemplating the abstract conceptions which man has framed; it can only be understood through patient and persistent observation. Mr. Courthope's guidance therefore soon fails us, because in the two examples he gives the word Nature appears to bear two distinct meanings; and he does not assist us by attempting a definition of his own. One suspects that, like Pope, he found it much easier to talk at large about Nature than to

assign the term a precise connotation. And as Pope uses it, there is, in point of fact, no precise connotation to be given.

"First follow Nature, and your judgment frame By her just standard, which is still the same; Unerring Nature, still divinely bright, One clear unchang'd and universal light, Life, force, and beauty must to all impart, At once the source, and end, and test of art" (Il. 68-73).

If we look at this passage we shall see that Pope has not in view anything so matter of fact as the somewhat trivial "nature" of Hamlet's address to the players, or the external system of which Bacon was thinking. It is not the merely normal, or the merely objective, that he means by Nature: but the universe viewed as the revelation of Mind. We are to follow Nature, because Nature is Reason incarnate, so to speak, in phenomena; that is, Reason revealed to us through our senses. Pope no doubt picked up this beautiful thought from the Stoic writers; he expresses it again in other places, for instance in the fine passage towards the close of Ep. I of the Essay on Man, which displays more real passion than one usually finds in his rhetoric. Unfortunately it is a far cry from the Reason immanent in the universe to the details of literary composition, and when Pope tries to bridge over the distance his efforts result only in inconsistency and ambiguity.

"Those Rules of old discover'd, not devis'd,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodiz'd;
Nature, like liberty, is but restrain'd
By the same laws which first herself ordain'd" (ll. 88–91).

Here Nature is thought of as under the bondage of rules or laws. The precepts of critics, laying down the general conditions of excellence in works of art, are somehow identified with laws of Nature, that is, the principles which formulate the regular sequence of phenomena, and these last are thought of as binding Nature, instead of being the expression of her essential order. When we speak of Nature

as being restrained by laws, we have left the pantheistic point of view of the Stoics. And when we speak of her as having ordained laws we have got into yet another philosophical position. While all the time the difficulty remains untouched, to show in exactly what way the rules of literary criticism are related to the external order of the universe. Every time that Pope recurs to the subject he makes the difficulty greater. He utters a number of admirably-put antitheses, each of which attaches a fresh shade of meaning to the word Nature. In some sense or other, each of them has a modicum of truth. But there is no general sense in which all of them, or a large majority of them, are true.

"When first young Maro in his boundless mind A work t' outlast immortal Rome design'd, Perhaps he seem'd above the critic's law, And but from Nature's fountains scorn'd to draw: But when t' examine ev'ry part he came, Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.

Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem; To copy Nature is to copy them" (Il. 130 seq.).

Here "Nature's fountains" is an idea more or less out of harmony with the comprehensive conception of Nature with which Pope set out. But if Nature is the divine Reason immanent in the universe, an all-pervading force which gives light and life and beauty to all we know, it is a little daring to say that "Nature and Homer" are "found the same". It is just because any great poet, or artist, can at most only reflect a small part of the light of Nature, that the danger of looking to the great masters arises. Only such light as falls on that particular facet reaches us, the rest we neglect. To copy Homer is to copy Nature, but only a part of Nature; besides, it is to copy a copy. Homer (according to Pope) is great only so far as he represents Nature, and it is extravagant to suggest that any representation of Nature is adequate to the original.

It is not necessary to go further; but the student may proceed to consider the meaning of the term Nature in ll. 651-2, where Pope tells us that the poets soon learnt to accept the precepts of Aristotle—

"Convinc'd 't was fit, Who conquer'd Nature should preside o'er Wit";

and in l. 724, adopted from the Duke of Buckinghamshire,

"Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well".

He will see that fresh ambiguities are introduced.

Perhaps, after all, the confusion is due to a further cause. The ambiguity belongs to another word besides Nature. If Pope had taken the trouble to think out Laws of Nature in what sense the "laws of Nature" are laws, and in what sense the "laws of criticism" are laws, he would not have fallen into so many inconsistencies.

At any rate, it is all-important to keep distinct the three types of uniformities which have commonly been called laws. The "laws of Nature" are mere expressions of observed uniformities in phenomena, whether external or internal, in the physical universe or in the kingdom of man. The "laws of art" are expressions of observed uniformities in the realm of human action; they tell us that if we want to produce certain effects, certain means must ordinarily be chosen. They depend on the former; but there is a fresh element, the assumption of an ideal which we desire to realize. They are what Kant calls "problematic imperatives"; they say, given that you wish for certain results, such and such steps must be taken, since the universe and human nature are what they are. But neither laws of Nature nor laws of art are in any true sense laws at all. The essence of a law consists in the fact that it is a command. It is not merely a customary habit, a regularity which as a matter of experience is observed; but a general order issued by a superior to persons capable of understanding and obeying it, and systematically enforced by penalties. The laws of Nature are not commands to rational beings, nor are they regularly enforced by penalties, though we often loosely speak as though they were. Nor are the laws of art. When Pope tells us (ll. 649 seq.) that the classical poets became the subjects of Aristotle, or that the French obeyed Boileau, because they were naturally slaves, he is reasoning like a poet, not like a critic. Metaphor has misled him.

But what is the practical outcome of Pope's Essay; what is the advice he gives the poets? Imitate the ancients, particularly Homer and Virgil. "To copy Nature the Essay. is to copy them." Yet if our main object be to copy Nature, what is the special advantage of copying these subaltern models? Pope never makes this clear, indeed seemingly never attempts to answer the question. "Nature, good sense, Homer, Virgil, and the Stagyrite, all, it seems, come to much the same thing", as Leslie Stephen remarks. Why then pick out the last three as specially valuable guides?

Mr. Courthope contends that Pope had a distinct conception of the answer. "The 'just standard' of Nature in poetry which Pope commends to the critic, is that direct imitative action of the imagination characteristic of Homer and the classical poets, as distinguished from the subjective or metaphysical method introduced by the Provençal poets, and continued by Dante and Petrarch through a long line of versifiers as late as the latter part of the seventeenth century. . . . It is true that Greek poetry, or the poetic imagination of the Greek race, operating on Nature, was the source of Greek theology, but the mythological conception of Nature thus found had nothing in common with the metaphysical and allegorical methods of thought common among the poets of mediæval Europe, which are themselves the product of Christian Revelation interpreted by the schoolmen. To this origin, it need hardly be said, is to be traced the Divine Comedy of Dante, but it is not so generally recognized that the same continuous system of thought, in its ultimate decrepitude, gave rise to what is usually known as the 'Metaphysical' school of English poetry in the seventeenth century."¹

It is a relief to find someone willing and able to defend the eighteenth-century poets and critics. The constant iteration of charges of shallowness, superficiality, and artificiality is a weariness to the flesh. But the Professor of Poetry at Oxford seems to make too great demands on us. In the first place, it cannot be admitted that the Greek poets took a specially direct view of the universe. Their descriptions of physical phenomena are usually slight, without detail and without much sympathy. They are as a rule conventional, mythological, superficial.

Professor Conington says that Pope "appears to have been the first English writer possessed of high poetical power (Milton, I have already intimated, I should wish to except) who addressed himself to the composition of poetry with the full determination to do his best. . . . Even in his most finished pieces there may be occasionally something that more study might have mended -an ill-turned thought, an inaccurate expression, a bad rhyme. So much may be readily conceded to those who, like Hazlitt and Mr. De Quincey, think the praise for his correctness exaggerated. But are there no blemishes of a similar kind in writers who are commonly allowed in these respects to come little short of perfection-in Virgil or Horace, for example? The point is not that Pope was universally correct, but that correctness . . . was one of his leading characteristics, and that the instances of carelessness which can be quoted from his works are not sufficiently numerous or important to disturb the general impression" (Oxford Essays, 1858, p. 9).

Pope meant by correctness conformity to classical models and common sense. "Aristotle", says Don Quixote in the continuation of his History by the licentiate Fernandez de

¹ Courthope, Life of Pope, pp. 50, 51.

Avellaneda, "is an infallible oracle. Not to follow his rules is to swerve from Nature and Reason." The two criteria do not always coincide, but Pope, like the Knight of La Mancha, chooses to overlook the possibility of their clashing. The classical ideal of art implies clearness and consistency of structure and subordination of detail. It is in the unity of effect that the charm of typically classical work principally lies. In typically mediæval work the charm comes largely from the details. In the Greek temple, proportion, simplicity, intelligibility, are almost everything. Even when we have imitative sculpture the design tends to become rhythmical, as in the long procession of the horsemen in the frieze of the cella in the Parthenon. In the Gothic church so much more depends on the variety of mouldings and enrichments, on the element of unexpectedness and improvisation, on the sense of profusion. So it is in literature. The Greek spirit reached perhaps its most complete literary expression in the dramas of Æschylus and Sophocles; and here we have the same features. The dignified restraint: the austere simplicity of motive, of plot, and of character drawing; the limitation as to the number of actors; and the sacred unities of time, place, and action themselves: all these stand in startling contrast with the inconsequence and complexity of the Elizabethan drama. The prodigality of incident, the crowded stage, the magnificent poetical parentheses, the conflicting tones of feeling, bewilder while they delight. The logical intellect of the eighteenth century was revolted by it. The right of strong emotion to appear in literature was denied. Instead of Lear we have Cato; and lyrical poetry almost disappears.

Literary opinion was formed by a small number of persons living a very artificial life. The Town was the arbiter of merit, and the Town cared little for wild nature. The "state of nature" which was to present itself to Rousseau and his successors as an ideal condition, appeared to most early eighteenth-century thinkers

almost entirely unattractive. The life of the solitary individual, in isolation from law and social discipline, was not even thought picturesque. The corsairs and border robbers and dalesmen, whom Byron, Scott, and Wordsworth presented as ideal figures, seemed beneath the notice of a gentleman. It was an age of clubs and coffee-houses, places for talk and not for meditation, where the opinion of well-bred men was regarded as the ultimate judge in matters of art, morality, philosophy, and religion. The hyperboles and conceits of Cowley were felt as an outrage on the sanctity of the obvious, just as much as the agonies of Lear and Cordelia. The claims of average common sense were felt to be final, and the authority of Homer and Aristotle was put forward to justify them.

The cult of correctness set in, and the criteria of literary achievement became negative instead of positive. The question was not so much, What has the poet done? as, What has he avoided? The precepts of Horace, Ideal of restated and reinforced by Boileau, gave a useful Poetry. set of tests, which could be easily applied. The proof of merit was compliance with the rules. "He is the best writer", says Dr. Henry Felton, in his Dissertation on Reading the Classics (1713), "against whom the fewest [faults] can be alleged." Consistency with itself, with the classics, and with common sense was the one thing needful in a literary production. "A composition is perfect", Dr. Felton tells us, "when the matter riseth out of the subject, when the thoughts are agreeable to the matter, and the expressions suitable to the thoughts, where there is no inconsistency from the beginning to the end, when the whole is perspicuous in the beautiful order of its parts and formed in due symmetry and proportion."

The work of the critic became the work of a judge. It was his business to act as magistrate and administer the laws of Parnassus; it was no longer his privilege to elucidate and explain, to understand what was hidden and reveal it

for the benefit of less sensitive or less reflective readers, but he sat in judgment to apply a code. "Formerly", complains Dryden, "the critics were quite another species of men. They were defenders of poets and commentators on their works; to illustrate obscure beauties; to place some passages in a better light; to redeem others from malicious interpretations; to help out an author's modesty who is not ostentatious of his wit. . . . Are our auxiliary forces turned our enemies? Are they from our seconds become principals against us?"

All the way through there is the tacit assumption that the rules of literary composition are as fixed and as ascertainable as the rules of grammar or spelling. The typical critic no more realized that you cannot achieve the highest kind of art by mere compliance with rules, than the typical moralist recognized that you cannot reach the highest morality by simply keeping laws and commandments. The plain prosaic eighteenth century was entirely satisfied with negative canons of conduct, and so it was satisfied with negative canons of art. The Decalogue, with its oft-repeated Thou shalt not, seemed to the official exponents of Christianity a complete exposition of the whole duty of man. The ethics of the most characteristic moralists of the eighteenth century, however much they differ in context, agree essentially in form. Both Butler and Paley are through and through jural. The virtuous life is not an attempt to reach an ideal; it consists in keeping a law revealed by Moses or by Jesus Christ, or by the inner voice of conscience. In the same way the critics propose to judge of the excellence of all literary performances. Excellence means keeping the law revealed by Horace and Boileau.

Wit: its Different Senses.

The word wit occurs nearly fifty times in the Essay on Criticism. It is used sometimes to denote a person, and sometimes to denote a mental quality.

But within these limits many finer distinctions are observ-

¹ Scott's edition, xii. 49.

able. In the second use Professor Courthope, for instance, notes five shades of meaning, Mr. West six; while they charitably overlook the equivocation in the more concrete usage. But an examination of the cases shows that these numbers by no means adequately represent the full extent of the ambiguity.

The following meanings can be clearly discriminated without any excessive subtlety:—

(1) Poetical genius (ll. 82, 17, 508).

(2) Subtlety and novelty of thought (ll. 28, 429).

(3) A man of bright intellect (esprit), as opposed both to poets and men of judgment (l. 36).

(4) A pretender to such esprit (Il. 45, 199).

(5) Intellect, understanding in general (11. 53, 209).

(6) Practical judgment, common sense (l. 81).

(7) Imagination (l. 233).

(8) A novel and far-fetched idea, "a conceit" (l. 292).
(9) Admirably-expressed commonplace (l. 297).

(10) Literature (ll. 243, 259, 456).

(11) Bright playful fancy—"sheer wit", as it was sometimes called (l. 302).

(12) A poet (l. 479).

These meanings may be grouped thus:-

I. Mental faculties (abstract noun)

(1) Poetical genius.
(2) Subtlety of understanding.
(5) Intellect in general.
(6) Practical judgment.
(7) Imagination.
(11) Playful fancy.

II. Mental products (8) Far-fetched idea, conceit.
(9) Admirably-expressed commonplace.
(10) Literature.

III. Men possessing certain faculties (concrete noun)
 (3) A man of bright intellect and "quickness of parts".
 (12) A poet.
 (4) A pretender to intellect.

Very often Pope uses the word in such a way that it is impossible to feel sure which of these meanings he has in view, or whether, indeed, he has not made a fresh meaning by blending two or more of them. (Cf. ll. 233, 303.)

The term wit was in the time of Pope primarily used as the antithesis of judgment. It involved retentive memory and rapidity of association, and the power therefore to recognize hidden and partial likeness. Owing to loose usage the term was also employed to cover visual imagination, the tendency to picture clearly before "the inner eye, which is the bliss of solitude". These two meanings had nothing necessarily in common; since a man may have a retentive and rapid memory without any great power of visualization, and vice versa. But in ordinary usage both were connected. as Locke makes clear in the classical passage on the subject. He appears to closely identify wit with "quickness of parts". "Men who have a great deal of wit and prompt memories have not always the clearest judgment or deepest reason. For, wit lying most in the assemblage of ideas and putting those together with quickness and variety wherein can be seen any resemblance or congruity, thereby to make up pleasant pictures and agreeable visions in the fancy; judgment, on the contrary, lies quite on the other side, in separating carefully one from another ideas wherein can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being misled by similitude and by affinity to take one thing for another. This is a way of proceeding quite contrary to metaphor and allusion, wherein for the most part lies that entertainment and pleasantry of wit which strikes so lively on the fancy" (Essay concerning) Human Understanding, Book ii, ch. xi, § 2).

Addison adds a fresh point (Spectator, No. 62). After quoting this passage from Locke, he adds, "This is, I think, the best and most philosophical account that I have ever met with of wit, which generally, though not always, consists in such a resemblance and congruity of ideas as this author mentions. I shall only add to it by way of explanation, that every resemblance of ideas is not that which we call wit, unless it be such an one that gives delight and surprise to the reader: these two properties seem essential to wit, more particularly the last of them. In order, therefore, that this

resemblance in the ideas be wit, it is necessary that the ideas should not lie too near one another in the nature of things; for where the likeness is obvious it gives no surprise. . . . Thus when a poet tells us the bosom of his mistress is as white as snow there is no wit in the comparison; but when he adds with a sigh, that it is as cold too, it then grows into wit."

The versification of the Essay on Criticism need not long delay us.1 Very seldom (only eight times) does a line run on to the next line without a pause; practically all are end-stopped. Further, in nearly every case the sense of the couplet is complete in itself; the meaning does not run on from one couplet to another (enjambement). The pause (or casura, as it is usually termed) is nearly always after the second foot, or else breaks the line into exactly equal halves. Every line has such a pause, although it is not always equally important, and frequently does not coincide with a stop. The great metrical masters as a rule vary the position of this pause very much. In Pope it nearly always comes after the second foot, or in the middle of the third. The following table gives the number of times in 100 lines of the present work (two groups of fifty), denoting the end of the first foot by I, and the middle of the next by 11/2, and so on:-

After	I	it occurs	21	imes
22	$\text{I}\!\not _2$	2.2	3	, ,
1.7	2	22	53	2.2
12	21/2	11	28	2.5
11	3	2.9	5	3.7
2.2	3½	13		"
2.7	4	2.7	Ιt	ime.
,,	4 1/2	, ,	I))

In it Pope uses Alexandrines twice, and triplets eight times.

"In order to break what would otherwise be a monotonous

"In order to break what would otherwise be a monotonous smoothness", remarks Dr. Abbott, "Pope often lays a metri-

¹ Compare my edition of the Rape of the Lock (Blackie & Son), pp. xxxi seq.

cal accent on an unemphatic syllable, short in quantity, placing after it an emphatic monosyllable, long in quantity, without the metrical accent." Thus:

"The lines tho' touch'd but faintly are drawn right" (l. 22).

Compare Rape of the Lock, Canto iii, l. 168:

"When num'rous wax-lights in bright order blaze".

Dr. Abbott also points out that Pope often elides *e* in *the*, "but not as Milton does before a metrically-accented syllable". In his earlier poems, I think, Pope rather carefully avoids the need to elide *e* in *the* at all.

Some of his own rules, as laid down in ll. 344 seq. of the *Essay*, he does not hesitate to break either in this work or in others. If ten low words do not often creep in one dull line, this undesirable maximum is almost reached in such verses as:

"That not alone what to your sense is due" (564).

"Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move" (390).

And it is actually attained in:

"Be not the first by whom the new are tried" (335);

but here the logical emphasis falls on "first" and "new", which have to bear the metrical stress, and the whole line runs trippingly in consequence. In the same way,

"Still pleased to teach, and yet not proud to know" (632),

though it breaks the rule laid down by himself, is a good line. Perhaps indeed Pope had such in view when he objected to "ten *low* words", meaning not ten monosyllables, but ten monosyllables none of which has a full emphasis. The same excuse can hardly be made for

"Want as much more to turn it to its use" (81).

And he often uses "the same unvaried chimes". Even the well-worn rhyme of breeze and trees, at which he pokes

fun in ll. 350-1, occurs twice within a few lines, in his fourth *Pastoral* (61-2, 79-80), besides in *Eloisa to Abelard* (159-60), and the *Essay on Man* (Ep. i. 271-2).

Pope was never good at rhyming, and his works afford evidence of some carelessness and some want of ear. His faults are mainly of three kinds:

- (1) He uses the same rhyme much too frequently. His own canon, as laid down in the letter to Cromwell (see p. 49) is too lax; nor does he even observe this easy rule. In the present poem of barely 750 lines he employs sense as a rhyme ten times, and wit a dozen.
- (2) He employs a series of partial rhymes, ending several couplets together with words having the same or similar vowels. Next to a false rhyme, a partial rhyme where no rhyme is wanted ought to be avoided. The effect is at once irritating and monotonous. As examples compare E.C., ll. 30-41 (write-spite, deride-side, spite-write, past-last, pass-ass, isle-Nile), where in twelve lines we get eight rhyming on the diphthongal i, and four with the broad â. This is repeated in ll. 195-208, where in fourteen lines ten rhyme on the diphthongal i. In 221-6 we get mind-behind, surprise-rise, try-sky, and four lines later eyes-wise. In 112-17 we have prey-they, aid-made, display-away.
- (3) He uses false or imperfect rhymes. These may be (a) mere printer's rhymes—e.g. caprice-nice¹ (E.C. 285-6), good-blood (303-4, 725-6), fool-dull (588-9), own-town (408-9), disapprov'd-belov'd (576-7), fove-love (376-7). (b) Imperfect rhymes—e.g. showed-trod (E.C., 94-5), esteem-them (139-40), delight-wit (237-8, cf. 301-2), appear-regular (251-2), err-singular (424-5), grass-place (311-2). (c) Good rhymes which look imperfect because pronunciation has changed since Pope's time—e.g. thoughts-faults (169-70, cf. 422-3), joined-mankind (187-8, cf. 346-7, 360-1, 524-5,

¹ Mr. A. J. Ellis seems uncertain whether caprice-nice was a true rhyme, having either of the two modern sounds. Many of the instances given here are separately explained, as they occur, in the Notes.

562-3, 669-70, 687-8), safe-laugh (450-1), take-speak (584-5, cf. 626-8). Doom-Rome (685-6), dome-Rome (247-8) cannot both be admitted. Worn-turn (446-7) may perhaps stand. Worn was not unlikely pronounced with same vowel sound as worm is still; or more probably both worn and turn were pronounced with the long u sound as in doom.

There are more doubtful cases. Thus Pope may have kept up the seventeenth-century pronunciation of care (which was that of our own car), and also of war (which also rhymed with car, far, &c.). If so, the rhyme in ll. 536-7 was then a perfect one. Possibly, too, glass-place (ll. 311-2). Extremephlegm (661-2) was probably a good rhyme, the vowels having the sound of the long continental i; so that extreme was pronounced as it is at present and phlegm (which in the early editions was spelt fle'me) to rhyme with it. Sometimes, however, in the early eighteenth century phlegm had its modern pronunciation.

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(M 647)



AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

I.

'T is hard to say if greater want of skill	
Appear in writing or in judging ill;	
But of the two less dang'rous is th' offence	
To tire our patience than mislead our sense:	
Some few in that, but numbers err in this,	5
Ten censure wrong for one who writes amiss;	
A fool might once himself alone expose,	
Now one in verse makes many more in prose.	
'T is with our judgments as our watches, none	
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.	10
In Poets as true genius is but rare,	
True Taste as seldom is the Critic's share;	
Both must alike from Heav'n derive their light,	
These born to judge, as well as those to write.	
Let such teach others who themselves excel,	15
And censure freely who have written well.	
Authors are partial to their wit, 't is true,	
But are not Critics to their judgment too?	
Yet, if we look more closely, we shall find	
Most have the seeds of judgment in their mind:	20
Nature affords at least a glimm'ring light;	
The lines, tho' touch'd but faintly, are drawn right:	
But as the slightest sketch, if justly trac'd,	
Is by ill colouring but the more disgrac'd,	
So by false learning is good sense defac'd:	25

Some are bewilder'd in the maze of schools,	
And some made coxcombs Nature meant but fools:	
In search of wit these lose their common sense,	
And then turn Critics in their own defence:	
Each burns alike, who can or cannot write,	30
Or with a Rival's or an Eunuch's spite.	
All fools have still an itching to deride,	
And fain would be upon the laughing side.	
If Mævius scribble in Apollo's spite,	
There are who judge still worse than he can write.	35
Some have at first for Wits, then Poets pass'd;	
Turn'd Critics next, and prov'd plain fools at last.	
Some neither can for Wits nor Critics pass,	
As heavy mules are neither horse nor ass.	
Those half-learn'd witlings, num'rous in our isle,	40
As half-form'd insects on the banks of Nile;	
Unfinish'd things, one knows not what to call,	
Their generation's so equivocal;	
To tell 'em would a hundred tongues require,	
Or one vain wit's, that might a hundred tire.	45
But you who seek to give and merit fame,	
And justly bear a Critic's noble name,	
Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,	
How far your genius, taste, and learning go;	
Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet,	50
And mark that point where sense and dulness meet.	
Nature to all things fix'd the limits fit,	
And wisely curb'd proud man's pretending wit.	
As on the land while here the ocean gains,	
In other parts it leaves wide sandy plains,	55
Thus in the soul while memory prevails,	
The solid pow'r of understanding fails;	
Where beams of warm imagination play,	
The memory's soft figures melt away.	

One science only will one genius fit;	60
So vast is art, so narrow human wit:	
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,	
But oft in those confin'd to single parts.	
Like kings we lose the conquests gain'd before,	
By vain ambition still to make them more:	65
Each might his sev'ral province well command,	
Would all but stoop to what they understand.	
First follow Nature, and your judgment frame	
By her just standard, which is still the same:	
Unerring NATURE, still divinely bright,	70
One clear, unchang'd, and universal light,	,
Life, force, and beauty must to all impart,	
At once the source, and end, and test of Art.	
Art from that fund each just supply provides,	
Works without show, and without pomp presides:	75
In some fair body thus th' informing soul	
With spirits feeds, with vigour fills the whole;	
Each motion guides, and ev'ry nerve sustains,	
Itself unseen, but in th' effects remains.	
Some, to whom Heav'n in wit has been profuse,	80
Want as much more to turn it to its use;	
For wit and judgment often are at strife,	
Tho' meant each other's aid, like man and wife.	
'T is more to guide than spur the Muse's steed,	
Restrain his fury than provoke his speed:	85
The winged courser, like a gen'rous horse,	
Shows most true mettle when you check his course.	
Those Rules of old, discover'd, not devis'd,	
Are Nature still, but Nature methodiz'd:	
Nature, like liberty, is but restrain'd	90
By the same laws which first herself ordain'd.	
Here how learn'd Greece her useful rules indites,	
When to repress and when indulge our flights:	

High on Parnassus' top her sons she show'd,
And pointed out those arduous paths they trod; 95
Held from afar, aloft, th' immortal prize,
And urg'd the rest by equal steps to rise.
Just precepts thus from great examples giv'n,
She drew from them what they deriv'd from Heav'n.
The gen'rous Critic fann'd the Poet's fire,
And taught the world with reason to admire.
Then Criticism the Muse's handmaid prov'd,
To dress her charms, and make her more belov'd:
But following wits from that intention stray'd;
Who could not win the mistress, woo'd the maid; 105
Against the Poets their own arms they turn'd,
Sure to hate most the men from whom they learn'd.
So modern 'Pothecaries, taught the art
By Doctors' bills to play the Doctor's part,
Bold in the practice of mistaken rules, 110
Prescribe, apply, and call their masters fools.
Some on the leaves of ancient authors prey;
Nor time nor moths e'er spoil'd so much as they:
Some drily plain, without invention's aid,
Write dull receipts how poems may be made; 115
These leave the sense, their learning to display,
And those explain the meaning quite away.
You then whose judgment the right course would
steer,
Know well each Ancient's proper character;
His fable, subject, scope in ev'ry page; 120
Religion, Country, genius of his Age:
Without all these at once before your eyes,
Cavil you may, but never criticise.
Be Homer's works your study and delight,
Read them by day, and meditate by night; 125
Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,

And trace the Muses upward to their spring.	
Still with itself compar'd, his text peruse;	
And let your comment be the Mantuan Muse.	
When first young Maro in his boundless mind	130
A work t' outlast immortal Rome design'd,	
Perhaps he seem'd above the critic's law,	
And but from Nature's fountains scorn'd to draw:	
But when t' examine every part he came,	
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.	135
Convinc'd, amaz'd, he checks the bold design,	
And rules as strict his labour'd work confine,	
As if the Stagirite o'erlook'd each line.	
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;	
To copy Nature is to copy them.	140
Some beauties yet no Precepts can declare,	
For there's a happiness as well as care.	
Music resembles Poetry; in each	
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,	
And which a master-hand alone can reach.	145
If, where the rules not far enough extend,	
(Since rules were made but to promote their end)	
Some lucky Licence answer to the full	
Th' intent propos'd, that Licence is a rule.	
Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,	150
May boldly deviate from the common track.	
Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,	
And rise to faults true Critics dare not mend;	
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,	
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,	155
Which, without passing thro' the judgment, gains	
The heart, and all its end at once attains.	
In prospects thus, some objects please our eyes,	
Which out of nature's common order rise,	
The shapeless rock, or hanging precipice.	160

But though the Ancients thus their rules invade,	
(As Kings dispense with laws themselves have made	()
Moderns, beware! or if you must offend	,
Against the precept, ne'er transgress its End;	
Let it be seldom, and compell'd by need;	165
And have, at least, their precedent to plead;	
The Critic else proceeds without remorse,	
Seizes your fame, and puts his laws in force	
I know there are to whose presumptuous thoughts	S
Those freer beauties, ev'n in them, seem faults.	170
Some figures monstrous and misshap'd appear,	
Consider'd singly, or beheld too near,	
Which, but proportion'd to their light or place,	
Due distance reconciles to form and grace.	
A prudent chief not always must display	175
His pow'rs in equal ranks and fair array,	
But with th' occasion and the place comply,	
Conceal his force, nay, seem sometimes to fly.	
Those oft are stratagems which errors seem,	
Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream.	180
Still green with bays each ancient Altar stands,	
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;	
Secure from Flames, from Envy's fiercer rage,	
Destructive War, and all-involving Age.	
See, from each clime the learn'd their incense bring	!
Hear, in all tongues consenting Pæans ring!	186
In praise so just let ev'ry voice be join'd,	
And fill the gen'ral chorus of mankind.	
Hail, Bards triumphant! born in happier days,	
Immortal heirs of universal praise!	190
Whose honours with increase of ages grow,	
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow;	
Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,	
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found!	
11	

Oh may some spark of your celestial fire

The last, the meanest of your sons inspire,
(That on weak wings, from far, pursues your flights,
Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes)

To teach vain Wits a science little known,
T' admire superior sense, and doubt their own!

II.

OF all the Causes which conspire to blind Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind. What the weak head with strongest bias rules, Is Pride, the never-failing vice of fools. Whatever nature has in worth denied. 205 She gives in large recruits of needful pride; For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find What wants in blood and spirits swell'd with wind. Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defence, And fills up all the mighty Void of sense: 210 If once right reason drives that cloud away, Truth breaks upon us with resistless day. Trust not yourself; but your defects to know, Make use of ev'ry friend—and ev'ry foe.

A little learning is a dang'rous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of Arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
But more advanc'd, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So pleas'd at first the tow'ring Alps we try,

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225

	Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky!	
I	Th' eternal snows appear already past,	
	And the first clouds and mountains seem the last	
* 40. *	But those attain'd, we tremble to survey	
	The growing labours of the lengthen'd way;	230
ě.	Th' increasing prospect tires our wand'ring eyes	
1000	Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!	
	A perfect Judge will read each work of Wit	
	With the same spirit that its author writ;	
	Survey the WHOLE, nor seek slight faults to find	235
	Where nature moves, and rapture warms the mind;	
	Nor lose, for that malignant dull delight,	
	The gen'rous pleasure to be charm'd with Wit.	
	But in such lays as neither ebb nor flow,	
	Correctly cold, and regularly low,	240
	That, shunning faults, one quiet tenour keep,	
	We cannot blame indeed—but we may sleep.	
	In wit, as nature, what affects our hearts	
	Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts;	
	T is not a lip or eye we beauty call,	245
	But the joint force and full result of all.	
	Thus when we view some well proportion'd dome,	
	(The world's just wonder, and ev'n thine, O Rome!)	
	No single parts unequally surprise,	
	All comes united to th' admiring eyes,	250
	No monstrous height, or breadth, or length appear;	
	The Whole at once is bold and regular.	
	Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,	
	Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.	
	In every work regard the writer's End,	255
	Since none can compass more than they intend;	
	And if the means be just, the conduct true,	
	Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due.	
	As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit,	

T' avoid great errors, must the less commit;	260
Neglect the rules each verbal Critic lays,	
For not to know some trifles is a praise.	
Most Critics, fond of some subservient art,	
Still make the Whole depend upon a Part:	
They talk of principles, but notions prize,	265
And all to one lov'd Folly sacrifice.	
Once on a time La Mancha's Knight, they say,	J
A certain bard encount'ring on the way,	
Discours'd in terms as just, with looks as sage,	
As e'er could Dennis, of the Grecian stage;	270
Concluding all were desp'rate sots and fools,	
Who durst depart from Aristotle's rules.	
Our Author, happy in a judge so nice,	
Produc'd his play, and begg'd the Knight's advice;	
Make him observe the subject and the plot,	275
The manners, passions, unities; what not?	
All which, exact to rule, were brought about,	
Were but a Combat in the lists left out.	
'What! leave the Combat out?' exclaims the Knigh	t.
Yes, or we must renounce the Stagirite.	280
'Not so, by Heav'n!' (he answers in a rage),	
'Knights, squires, and steeds must enter on the stag	e.'
So vast a throng the stage can ne'er contain.	
'Then build a new, or act it on a plain.'	
Thus Critics, of less judgment than caprice,	285
Curious, not knowing, not exact, but nice,	/
Form short Ideas, and offend in arts	/
(As most in manners) by a love to parts,	
Some to Conceit alone their taste confine,	
And glitt'ring thoughts struck out at ev'ry line;	290
Pleas'd with a work where nothing's just or fit,	
One glaring Chaos and wild heap of wit.	
Poets, like painters, thus unskill'd to trace	

Ho

The naked nature and the living grace, With gold and jewels cover ev'ry part, 295 And hide with ornaments their want of art. True Wit is Nature to advantage dress'd, What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd; Something whose truth convinc'd at sight we find, That gives us back the image of our mind. 300 As shades more sweetly recommend the light, So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit: For works may have more wit than does 'em good, As bodies perish thro' excess of blood. Others for Language all their care express, 305 And value books, as women men, for Dress: Their praise is still,—the Style is excellent; The Sense they humbly take upon content. Words are like leaves; and where they most abound, Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found. False Eloquence, like the prismatic glass, Its gaudy colours spreads on ev'ry place; The face of Nature we no more survey, All glares alike, without distinction gay; But true expression, like th' unchanging Sun, 315 Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon; It gilds all objects, but it alters none. Expression is the dress of thought, and still Appears more decent as more suitable; A vile conceit in pompous words express'd 320 Is like a clown in regal purple dress'd: For diff'rent styles with diff'rent subjects sort, As several garbs with country, town, and court. Some by old words to fame have made pretence, Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense; Such labour'd nothings, in so strange a style,

Amaze th' unlearn'd, and make the learned smile.

Unlucky, as Fungoso in the play, These sparks with awkward vanity display What the fine gentleman wore vesterday; 330 And but so mimic ancient wits at best, As apes our grandsires, in their doublets drest. In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold, Alike fantastic, if too new or old: Be not the first by whom the new are try'd, 335 Nor yet the last to lay the old aside. But most by Numbers judge a Poet's song, And smooth or rough with them is right or wrong: In the bright Muse though thousand charms conspire, Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire; 340 Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear, Not mend their minds; as some to Church repair, Not for the doctrine, but the music there. These equal syllables alone require, Tho' oft the ear the open vowels tire, 345 While expletives their feeble aid do join, And ten low words oft creep in one dull line: While they ring round the same unvary'd chimes, With sure returns of still expected rhymes; Where-e'er you find 'the cooling western breeze', In the next line, it 'whispers through the trees'; If crystal streams 'with pleasing murmurs creep' The reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with 'sleep'; Then, at the last and only couplet fraught With some unmeaning thing they call a thought, A needless Alexandrine ends the song, That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along. Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know What's roundly smooth, or languishingly slow; And praise the easy vigour of a line 360 Where Denham's strength and Waller's sweetness join.

mile

	True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,	
	As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.	
	'T is not enough no harshness gives offence;	
	The sound must seem an Echo to the sense.	365
Services.	Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,	
1	And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;	
-	But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,	
Venner de	The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar.	
à	When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,	,370
	The line too labours, and the words move slow:	l
27.4	Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,	,
e e 11	Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the m	nain!
65	Hear how Timotheus' varied lays surprise,	
	And bid alternate passions fall and rise!	375
	While at each change the son of Libyan Jove	
	Now burns with glory, and then melts with love;	
	Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,	
	Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow:	
	Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,	380
	And the world's victor stood subdu'd by Sound!	
	The pow'r of Music all our hearts allow,	
	And what Timotheus was, is DRYDEN now,	
	Avoid Extremes, and shun the fault of such	
	Who still are pleas'd too little or too much.	385
	At ev'ry trifle scorn to take offence;	
	That always shows great pride or little sense:	
	Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best	
	Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.	000
	Yet let not each gay Turn thy rapture move;	390
	For fools admire, but men of sense approve:	
	As things seem large which we through mists descry	,
	Dulness is ever apt to magnify	
	Some foreign writers, some our own despise;	005
	The Ancients only, or the Moderns prize.	395

Thus Wit, like Faith, by each man is apply'd	
To one small sect, and all are damn'd beside.	
Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,	
And force that sun but on a part to shine,	
Which not alone the southern wit sublimes,	400
But ripens spirits in cold northern climes;	
Which from the first has shone on ages past,	
Enlights the present, and shall warm the last;	
Tho' each may feel increases and decays,	
And see now clearer and now darker days.	405
Regard not then if Wit be old or new,	
But blame the false, and value still the true.	
Some ne'er advance a Judgment of their own,	
But catch the spreading notion of the Town;	
They reason and conclude by precedent,	410
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.	
Some judge of author's names, not works; and th	en
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.	
Of all this servile herd, the worst is he	
That in proud dulness joins with Quality;	415
A constant Critic at the great man's board,	
To fetch and carry nonsense for my Lord.	
What woful stuff this madrigal would be	
In some starv'd hackney sonneteer, or me!	
But let a Lord once own the happy lines,	420
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!	
Before his sacred name flies ev'ry fault,	
And each exalted stanza teems with thought!	
The Vulgar thus through Imitation err;	
As oft the Learn'd by being singular;	425
So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng	
By chance go right, they purposely go wrong.	
So Schismatics the plain believers quit,	6
And are but damn'd for having too much wit.	

Some praise at morning what they blame at night	,
But always think the last opinion right.	431
A Muse by these is like a mistress us'd,	
This hour she's idoliz'd, the next abus'd;	
While their weak heads, like towns unfortify'd,	
'Twixt sense and nonsense daily change their side.	435
Ask them the cause; they 're wiser still, they say;	
And still to-morrow's wiser than to-day.	
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow;	
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.	
Once School-divines this zealous isle o'er-spread;	440
Who knew most Sentences was deepest read:	
Faith, Gospel, all seem'd made to be disputed,	
And none had sense enough to be confuted.	
Scotists and Thomists now in peace remain,	
Amidst their kindred cobwebs in Duck-lane.	445
If Faith itself has diff'rent dresses worn,	
What wonder modes in Wit should take their turn?	
Oft', leaving what is natural and fit,	
The current folly proves the ready wit;	
And authors think their reputation safe,	450
Which lives as long as fools are pleas'd to laugh.	
Some, valuing those of their own side or mind,	
Still make themselves the measure of mankind:	
Fondly we think we honour merit then,	
When we but praise ourselves in other men.	455
Parties in Wit attend on those of State,	
And public faction doubles private hate.	
Pride, Malice, Folly, against Dryden rose,	
In various shapes of Parsons, Critics, Beaus:	
But sense surviv'd when merry jests were past;	460
For rising merit will buoy up at last.	
Might he return and bless once more our eyes,	
New Blackmores and new Milbourns must arise:	

Nay, should great Homer lift his awful head, Zoilus again would start up from the dead. Envy will merit as its shade pursue, But, like a shadow, proves the substance true; For envy'd Wit, like Sol eclips'd, makes known	465
Th' opposing body's grossness, not its own. When first that sun too pow'rful beams displays, It draws up vapours which obscure its rays; But ev'n those clouds at last adorn its way, Reflect new glories, and augment the day.	, 470
Be thou the first true merit to befriend; His praise is lost who stays till all commend. Short is the date, alas! of modern rhymes, And 't is but just to let them live betimes.	475
No longer now that golden age appears, When Patriarch-wits surviv'd a thousand years: Now length of Fame (our second life) is lost, And bare threescore is all ev'n that can boast: Our sons their fathers' failing language see,	480
And such as Chaucer is, shall Dryden be. So when the faithful pencil has design'd Some bright Idea of the master's mind, Where a new world leaps out at his command, And ready Nature waits upon his hand;	485
When the ripe colours soften and unite, And sweetly melt into just shade and light; When mellowing years their full perfection give, And each bold figure just begins to live, The treach'rous colours the fair art betray,	490
And all the bright creation fades away! Unhappy Wit, like most mistaken things, Atones not for that envy which it brings: In youth alone its empty praise we boast, But soon the short-liv'd vanity is lost;	495
(M 647)	F

Like some fair flow'r the early spring supplies,	
That gaily blooms, but ev'n in blooming dies.	
What is this Wit, which must our cares employ?	500
The owner's wife, that other men enjoy;	
Then most our trouble still when most admir'd,	
And still the more we give, the more requir'd;	
Whose fame with pains we guard, but lose with ea	se,
Sure some to vex, but never all to please;	505
'T is what the vicious fear, the virtuous shun;	
By fools 't is hated, and by knaves undone!	
If Wit so much from Ignorance undergo,	
Ah let not Learning too commence its foe!	
Of old those met rewards who could excel,	510
And such were prais'd who but endeavour'd well:	
Tho' triumphs were to gen'rals only due,	
Crowns were reserv'd to grace the soldiers too.	
Now, they who reach Parnassus' lofty crown	
Employ their pains to spurn some others down;	515
And while self-love each jealous writer rules,	
Contending wits become the sport of fools;	
But still the worst with most regret commend,	
For each ill Author is as bad a Friend.	
To what base ends, and by what abject ways,	520
Are mortals urg'd thro' sacred lust of praise!	
Ah! ne'er so dire a thirst of glory boast,	
Nor in the Critic let the Man be lost.	
Good-nature and good-sense must ever join;	
To err is human, to forgive, divine.	525
But if in noble minds some dregs remain,	020
Not yet purg'd off, of spleen and sour disdain,	
Discharge that rage on more provoking crimes,	
Nor fear a dearth in these flagitious times.	
No pardon vile Obscenity should find,	530
Tho' wit and art conspire to move our mind;	000
The wie and are conspire to move our mind,	

But Dulness with Obscenity must prove As shameful sure as Impotence in love. In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease, Sprung the rank weed, and thriv'd with large increase: When love was all an easy Monarch's care: 536 Seldom at council, never in a war: Jilts rul'd the state, and statesmen farces writ; Nay wits had pensions, and young Lords had wit; The Fair sate panting at a Courtier's play, 540 And not a Mask went unimprov'd away: The modest fan was lifted up no more, And Virgins smil'd at what they blush'd before. The following licence of a Foreign reign Did all the dregs of bold Socinus drain; 545 Then unbelieving priests reform'd the nation, And taught more pleasant methods of salvation: Where Heav'n's free subjects might their rights dispute, Lest God himself should seem too absolute: Pulpits their sacred satire learn'd to spare. 550 And Vice admir'd to find a flatt'rer there! Encourag'd thus, Wit's Titans brav'd the skies, And the press groan'd with licens'd blasphemics. These monsters, Critics! with your darts engage, Here point your thunder, and exhaust your rage! 555 Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice, Will needs mistake an author into vice: All seems infected that th' infected spy, As all looks yellow to the jaundic'd eye.

III.

LEARN then what Morals Critics ought to show, 560 For 't is but half a Judge's task, to know.

'T is not enough, taste, judgment, learning join;

In all you speak, let truth and candour shine; That not alone what to your sense is due All may allow, but seek your friendship too. Be silent always when you doubt your sense, And speak, tho' sure, with seeming diffidence;	565
Some positive persisting fops we know,	
Who, if once wrong, will needs be always so;	
But you with pleasure own your errors past,	570
And make each day a Critic on the last.	
'T is not enough your counsel still be true;	
Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do;	
Men must be taught as if you taught them not,	
And things unknown propos'd as things forgot.	575
Without Good-Breeding truth is disapprov'd;	
That only makes superior sense belov'd.	
Be niggards of advice on no pretence,	
For the worse avarice is that of sense.	
With mean complaisance ne'er betray your trust,	580
Nor be so civil as to prove unjust.	
Fear not the anger of the wise to raise;	
Those best can bear reproof, who merit praise.	
'T were well might critics still this freedom take,	
But Appius reddens at each word you speak,	585
And stares, tremendous, with a threat'ning eye,	
Like some fierce Tyrant in old tapestry.	
Fear most to tax an Honourable fool,	
Whose right it is, uncensur'd, to be dull:	
Such, without wit, are Poets when they please,	590
As, without learning, they can take Degrees.	
Leave dang'rous truths to unsuccessful Satires,	
And flattery to fulsome Dedicators;	
Whom, when they praise, the world believes no mor	re
Than when they promise to give scribbling o'er.	595
'T is best sometimes your censure to restrain.	

And charitably let the dull be vain;	
Your silence there is better than your spite,	
For who can rail so long as they can write?	
Still humming on their drowsy course they keep,	600
And lash'd so long, like tops, are lash'd asleep.	
False steps but help them to renew the race,	
As, after stumbling, Jades will mend their pace.	
What crowds of these, impenitently bold,	
In sounds and jingling syllables grown old,	605
Still run on Poets, in a raging vein,	
Ev'n to the dregs and squeezings of the brain,	
Strain out the last dull droppings of their sense,	
And rhyme with all the rage of Impotence!	
Such shameless Bards we have; and yet 't is true	610
There are as mad abandon'd Critics too.	
The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,	
With loads of learned lumber in his head,	
With his own tongue still edifies his ears,	
And always list'ning to himself appears.	615
All books he reads, and all he reads assails,	
From Dryden's Fables down to Durfey's Tales.	
With him, most authors steal their works, or buy;	
Garth did not write his own Dispensary.	
Name a new Play, and he's the Poet's friend;	620
Nay, show'd his faults-but when would Poets mend	1 ?
No place so sacred from such fops is barr'd,	
Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's churchya	rd:
Nay, fly to Altars; there they 'll talk you dead;	
For Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread.	625
Distrustful sense with modest caution speaks,	
It still looks home, and short excursions makes;	
But rattling nonsense in full volleys breaks,	
And never shock'd, and never turn'd aside,	
Bursts out, resistless, with a thund'ring tide.	630

But where's the man who counsel can bestow,	
Still pleas'd to teach, and yet not proud to know?	
Unbiass'd or by favour or by spite,	
Not dully prepossess'd, nor blindly right;	
Tho' learn'd, well-bred, and tho' well-bred, sincere:	635
Modestly bold, and humanly severe;	
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,	
And gladly praise the merit of a foe?	
Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfin'd,	
A knowledge both of books and human kind;	640
Gen'rous converse; a soul exempt from pride;	
And love to praise, with reason on his side?	
Such once were Critics; such the happy few,	
Athens and Rome in better ages knew.	
The mighty Stagirite first left the shore,	645
Spread all his sails, and durst the deeps explore;	
He steer'd securely, and discover'd far,	
Led by the light of the Mæonian Star.	
Poets, a race long unconfin'd and free,	
Still fond and proud of savage liberty,	650
Receiv'd his laws, and stood convinc'd 't was fit,	
Who conquer'd Nature, should preside o'er Wit.	
Horace still charms with graceful negligence,	
And without method talks us into sense,	
Will, like a friend, familiarly convey	655
The truest notions in the easiest way.	
He who, supreme in judgment as in wit,	
Might boldly censure as he boldly writ,	
Yet judg'd with coolness, tho' he sung with fire;	
His Precepts teach but what his works inspire.	660
Our Critics take a contrary extreme,	
They judge with fury, but they write with phlegm:	
Nor suffers Horace more in wrong Translations	
By Wits, than Critics in as wrong Quotations.	

The scholar's learning with the courtier's ease. In grave Quintilian's copious works, we find The justest rules and clearest method join'd. Thus useful arms in magazines we place, All rang'd in order, and dispos'd with grace; But less to please the eye than arm the hand, Still fit for use, and ready at command. Thee, bold Longinus! all the Nine inspire, And bless their Critic with a Poet's fire: An ardent Judge, who, zealous in his trust, With warmth gives sentence, yet is always just; Whose own example strengthens all his laws, And is himself that great Sublime he draws. Thus long succeeding Critics justly reign'd, Licence repress'd, and useful laws ordain'd. Learning and Rome alike in empire grew, And Arts still follow'd where her eagles flew; From the same foes, at last, both felt their doom, And the same age saw Learning fall and Rome. With Tyranny then Superstition join'd, As that the body, this enslav'd the mind; Much was believ'd, but little understood, And to be dull was constru'd to be good: A second deluge Learning thus o'er-run: And the Monks finish'd what the Goths begun. At length Erasmus, that great injur'd name, (The glory of the Priesthood and the shame!) Stemm'd the wild torrent of a barb'rous age, And drove those holy Vandals off the stage. But see! each Muse in Leo's golden days	See Dionysius Homer's thoughts refine, And call new beauties forth from ev'ry line! Fancy and art in gay Petronius please,	665
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But see! each Muse in Leo's golden days		
Starts from her trance, and trims her wither a bays;	Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays;	

Rome's ancient Genius, o'er its ruins spread,	
Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head.	700
Then Sculpture and her sister-arts revive;	
Stones leap'd to form, and rocks began to live;	
With sweeter notes each rising Temple rung;	
A Raphael painted, and a Vida sung:	
Immortal Vida! on whose honour'd brow	705
The Poet's bays and Critic's ivy grow;	
Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,	
As next in place to Mantua, next in fame!	
But soon by impious arms from Latium chas'd,	
Their ancient bounds the banish'd Muses pass'd	710
Thence Arts o'er all the northern world advance,	
But Critic-learning flourish'd most in France;	
The rules a nation, born to serve, obeys,	
And Boileau still in right of Horace sways.	
But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despis'd,	715
And kept unconquer'd and unciviliz'd;	
Fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold,	
We still defy'd the Romans, as of old.	
Yet some there were, among the sounder few	
Of those who less presum'd and better knew,	720
Who durst assert the juster ancient cause,	
And here restor'd Wit's fundamental laws.	
Such was the Muse, whose rules and practice tell,	
"Nature's chief Master-piece is writing well".	
Such was Roscommon, not more learn'd than good,	725
With manners gen'rous as his noble blood;	
To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,	
And ev'ry author's merit but his own.	
Such late was Walsh—the Muse's judge and friend,	
Who justly knew to blame or to commend:	730
To failings mild, but zealous for desert,	,00
The clearest head, and the sincerest heart.	
2 20 01001 000 Money wild bill bill of the of the of	

This humble praise, lamented shade! receive;
This praise at least a grateful Muse may give:
The Muse, whose early voice you taught to sing,
Prescrib'd her heights, and prun'd her tender wing,
(Her guide now lost) no more attempts to rise,
But in low numbers short excursions tries;
Content, if hence th' unlearn'd their wants may view,
The learn'd reflect on what before they knew:
Careless of censure, nor too fond of fame;
Still pleas'd to praise, yet not afraid to blame;
Averse alike to flatter or offend;
Nor free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend.

l. 4. sense, judgment.

1. 6. censure, judge. (Lat. censeo.) The word did not originally connote unfavourable judgment. "Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment", in *Hamlet*, i. 3. 69, means "Hear each man's opinion, but reserve your own".

1. 15. who themselves excel. According to modern usage such should be followed by the relative as. But this rule was not by any means universal in the early 18th century. See l. 385 below. Com-

pare Abbott, Shakespearian Grammar, § 278.

In support of his dictum, Pope quotes from a very doubtful work on Rhetoric, once ascribed to Cicero, and from Pliny: "Qui scribit artificiose, ab aliis commode scripta facile intellegere poterit" (Cicero, Ad Herennium, iv, cap. 4). "De pictore, sculptore, fictore, nisi artifex, judicare [non potest]" (Pliny the younger, Epistolee, i. 10). Dennis pertinently asks, "Was Aristotle himself, the very father of critics, a poet? . . . Dionysius Halicarnassus and Dionysius Longinus among the Greeks, and Quintilian among the Romans, were free censurers yet no poets. And so are Bossu and Dacier at present among the French" (Reflections upon a Late Rhapsody, p. 3).

- 1. 17. wit, poetical genius. See Introduction, p. lviii seq.
- 1. 20. Most have the seeds of judgment. Pope quotes Cicero (not quite accurately) to the same effect: "Omnes tacito quodam sensu, sine ulla arte aut ratione, quæ sint in artibus ac rationibus recta ac prava dijudicant" (De Oratore, iii, cap. 50). This was a favourite opinion in the 17th and 18th centuries. Thus Locke says: "Every man carries about him a touchstone, if he will make use of it, to distinguish substantial gold from superficial glitterings, truth from appearances. And indeed the use and benefit of this touchstone, which is natural reason, is spoiled and lost only by assumed prejudices, overweening presumption, and narrowing our minds" (Conduct of the Understanding, § 3). Pope, it will be noticed, does not go as far as Cicero, or Locke; he only allows that the germs of correct judgment are to be found in the average man.
- 1. 23. But as the slightest sketch. There are eight triplets in the present work. Pope, though he still occasionally used them,

soon after employed them more sparingly. Thus not a single triplet occurs in the Rape of the Lock or in the Essay on Man. Johnson points out that "he uses them more liberally in his translation than his poems" (Life of Pope, ed. Ryland, p. 116).

1. 26. the maze of schools, differing systems of criticism; or, perhaps, the intricacies of academic discussion. The schools mean either the various kinds of opinion, or else the over-refined methods of dealing with literary questions such as were common in universities.

The passage is not very clear, but Pope seems to have in view three distinct classes of bad critics:—(1) those who are bewildered by ultra-refinements; (2) those who are vain and conceited; (3) those who, having written badly, are obliged to write critical works in defence of their own mistakes, like Rymer and Dennis.

1. 31. Or...or, either...or. "The eunuch's spite" is the malice of impotence.

Notice the rhymes: "write-spite, deride-side, spite-write, in six consecutive lines; followed by past-last, pass-ass.

- 1. 32. still, always.
- 1.34. Mævius, a bad poet, an enemy of Horace's. Nothing is known of his life or works. He has gone down linked in a twin dishonour with Bavius; compare Virgil's

"Qui Bavium non odit, amet tua carmina, Mævi"—
(Eclog. iii. 90).

- 1. 35. There are who. Imitates the Latin idiom, sunt qui.
- 1. 41. half-form'd insects on the banks of Nile. These, neither wits nor critics, are like the imperfect insects generated by the sun from the mud of the Nile, which are, as Dryden says, "part of them kindled into life and part a lump of unformed, unanimated mud". In Pope's time the generation of living beings by heat from certain sorts of mud was still commonly believed in, for though a few scientific men had begun to be sceptical about what is now called spontaneous generation, the opinion of such authorities as Bacon and Harvey was in favour of it. By the middle of the 18th century the experiments of Redi (d. 1697) and others had convinced many, if not most, naturalists of its impossibility.
- 1. 43. equivocal generation, a technical name for spontaneous generation; the origin of living things from dead matter.
- 1. 44. To tell 'em, to count them. Compare "Every shepherd tells his tale" in L'Allegro. 'Em is not a contraction of them, but stands for the A.S. hem.
 - 1. 53. pretending wit, aspiring, ambitious mind.

- 1. 56. Thus in the soul. Pope's psychology is all wrong. He suggests that understanding and memory, and that memory and imagination, are incompatible. This is by no means true. The same person may have all these developed in a very high degree, as was the case with Lord Macaulay, for instance. The metaphor in lines 58–59 is hopelessly inaccurate and misleading. A great capacity for constructive imagination certainly does not destroy the possibility of clear and enduring memory. Thus Ben Jonson tells us he could repeat all he had written, and whole books he had read (Timber).
- 1. 62. peculiar, special, particular; from the Lat. peculium, private property.
- 1. 66. sev'ral, particularly belonging to one's self, like peculiar in 1. 62.

Several comes from Low Latin separale, a thing set apart; which comes in turn from Lat. separare. It is still used in legal documents in this sense, e.g. in the phrase "severally and jointly", "estate in severalty".

1. 69. still, ever.

On what Pope meant by Nature, see Introduction.

1. 76. informing soul. According to the Aristotelian doctrine followed by the mediæval philosophers, and still commonly taught in the universities of Pope's time, the soul was the principle which gave not only life, but shape, qualities, and powers to the body. The form is that which renders a thing what it is and distinguishes it from others, says Nicole in L'Art de Penser; and to inform means to give the form, i.e. all the essential and distinctive qualities; hence to animate. Compare Essay on Man, i. 275, "Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part"; and Cowley's verses On the Death of Mr. Will Hervey (stanza 10):

"Large was his soul; as large a soul as e'er Submitted to inform a body here".

- 1. 80. in wit has been profuse. Pope plays on two meanings of wit, viz. poetical genius and acuteness of intellect. They have plenty of wit in the former sense; but want as much more of wit in the second sense if they are to use the former profitably.
- 1. 86. The winged courser, Pegasus, the horse associated with the Muses. He struck his hoof on Mount Helicon, the mountain of the Muses, and there sprang up the well of Hippocrene, the fount of poetical inspiration. He is by some poets said to have been first tamed by Athene and given to Bellerophon.

gen'rous, thoroughbred, of high ancestry.

1.90. like liberty. Originally Pope wrote monarchy. The change of word marks a change in his political opinion.

1. 91. which first herself ordain'd. Compare Winter's Tale, iv. 3:

"Yet Nature is made better by no mean,
But Nature makes that mean....
This is an art
Which does mend Nature, change it, rather; but
The art itself is Nature."

- 1. 94. Parnassus, a mountain near Delphi, one of the chief seats of Apollo and the Muses.
 - 1. 96. th' immortal prize. The prize of immortality.
- 1. 102. the Muse's handmaid prov'd. Wakefield quotes from Dryden's critical Dedication to his *Translation of Ovid*: "Formerly the critics were quite another species of men. They were defenders of poets, and commentators on their works, to illustrate obscure beauties, to place some passages in a better light, to redeem others from malicious interpretations. Are our auxiliary forces turned our enemies? Are they from our seconds become principals against us?"
- 1. 105. Who could not win the mistress. Compare Shake-speare. *Merchant of Venice*, iii. 2. 200: "You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid".
- 1. 109. Doctors' bills, prescriptions. Bill is a doublet of bull (bulla). "After the bills made by the great Physician God, prescribing the medicine Himself" (Sir Thomas More).
- 1. 112. on the leaves of ancient authors prey. Either by comment or by emending the text. Mr. West thinks the latter, calling this line "a sneer at the editors who laboured to restore the Greek and Latin texts", e.g. Bentley.
 - 1. 120. fable, story of an epic or drama.
- 1.129. the Mantuan Muse. Publius Virgilius Maro (70-19 B.C.), who was born near Mantua.
- 1. 130. When first young Maro. "It is a tradition preserved by Servius, that Virgil began with writing a poem of the Alban and Roman affairs, which he found above his years, and decided first to imitate Theocritus on rural subjects, and afterwards to copy Homer in heroic poetry" (Pope's note).
- 1. 138. the Stagirite. Aristotle, the philosopher (384–322), was born at Stageira, in Macedonia. He wrote treatises on Rhetoric and Poetics, as well as on Ethics, Politics, Logic, Metaphysics, and Natural Science.
- 1. 140. is to copy them. One does not copy rules; one obeys them. Pope really means by them, "the ancients", and not their rules.
 - l. 141. yet, however.

- l. 142. a happiness, a lucky achievement which comes without being anxiously sought for.
- l. 152. gloriously offend. Compare Dryden's Aurengzebe, Act iv (Scott's edit., v. 243):
 - "Mean soul! and dar'st not gloriously offend?"
- 1. 154. brave disorder. Brave means handsome, fine; cf. Tempest, i. 2. 6. Wakefield quotes from a translation of Boileau's Art of Poetry, by Soame and Dryden (1689):
 - "Her gen'rous style at random oft will part, And by a brave disorder shows her art".
 - l. 169. there are. See note to l. 35.
- 1. 170. ev'n in them, seem faults. "Them" is, of course, the ancients. The l in faults was not pronounced in Pope's time, any more than it is now pronounced in calf, half; so that fault—thought was a good rhyme. Cf. 1. 422.
 - 1. 173. but proportion'd to their light or place.

"Ut pictura, poesis; erit quæ, si proprius stes, Te capiat magis; et quædam, si longius abstes: Hæc amat obscurum; volet hæc sub luce videri." —Horace, Ars Poet., 361-63.

This passage, as translated by Conington, runs-

"Some poems, like some paintings, take the eye Best at a distance, some when looked at nigh. One loves the shade; one would be seen in light, And boldly challenges the keenest sight."

- l. 180. Homer nods.
 - "Indignor, quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus."
 —Horace, Ars Poet., 359.
- 1. 186. Pæans. Pæan meant originally a hymn in honour of Apollo; from $\pi \alpha \iota \acute{a} \nu$, the healer or physician, a name applied to him.
- Il. 187-88. join'd—mankind. Notice that Pope's rhyme is not imperfect. This was the ordinary pronunciation of oi, and survives in the rustic "line of pork" for "loin". Compare Il. 346-47, 360-61, 524-25, 562-63, 669-70, 687-88, for other instances.
- 1. 194. that must not yet be found. Worlds that cannot yet be discovered. *Must* is the past tense of M.E. moot or mot, I am able; and in such cases as the present there is scarcely any suggestion of obligation. Wakefield quotes from Cowley's *Davideis* (ii. 833):
 - "Round the whole earth his dreaded name shall sound, And reach to worlds that must not yet be found".

29

 203. bias, the inequality of form and balance which causes the bowl (in the game of bowls) to run in a curved course instead of a straight one; hence, metaphorically, prejudice, or one-sided interest.

1. 206. recruits, supplies. Not now used of things, but only of persons.

- 1. 208. What wants in blood and spirits. What is deficient in blood and "animal spirits". This last name was used in the 18th century to explain the phenomena of animal life, and in particular those due to the nerves and brain. The physiologists of Pope's day supposed that "a very thin liquor" was "distilled from the blood in the brain", and that this somehow filtered through the spinal cord and the nerves, and in some vague way "performed all the actions of sense and motion".
- 1. 216. Pierian spring. This is the same as the fountain Hippocrene, which rose on Mount Helicon, when the Muses sang in their contest with the nine daughters of Pierus, king of Macedonia. It means here, of course, the fount of learning.
- 1. 218. sobers us again. "The thought was taken from Lord Verulam (Advancement of Learning, Bk. i, near the end), who applies it to more serious inquiries" (Warburton). Warburton's reference is to i. 3 (Clar. Press ed., p. 9), which is not near the end but near the beginning. "It is an assured truth, and a conclusion of experience, that a little or superficial knowledge of philosophy may incline the mind of a man to atheism, but a further proceeding therein doth bring the mind back again to religion." Bacon says the same thing in Essay xvi.

1. 222. behind, concealed behind the lower summits.

The passage which follows has been extravagantly praised by Johnson, as "perhaps the best that English poetry can show". "A simile," he continues, "to be perfect, must both illustrate and ennoble the subject; must show it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity; but either of these qualities may be sufficient to recommend it. . . That it may be complete, it is required to exhibit, independently of its references, a pleasing image; for a simile is said to be a short episode. . . The simile of the Alps has no useless parts, yet affords a striking picture by itself; it makes the foregoing position better understood, and enables it to take faster hold on the attention; it assists the apprehension and elevates the fancy" (Life of Pope, ed. Ryland, pp. 101–102).

Warton traces the simile to a passage in Drummond of Haw-

thornden.

1. 237. delight. Notice the rhyme delight-wit.

1. 239. But in such lays. The *in* is not wanted. It is a case of *anacoluthon*, two incompatible constructions.

1. 240. regularly low, consistently commonplace. Compare-

"A frozen style that neither ebbs nor flows, Instead of pleasing makes us gape and doze".

-Soame, transl. of Boileau's Art of Poetry (ii. 71-2).

1. 247. dome, a cathedral church. Elwin and all other commentators assume that the word is used in the ordinary modern sense of a large cupola; but the lines that follow seem to refer to a complete building. A cupola is necessarily seen as a whole, and it is necessarily regular; while Pope lays stress on the special beauty derived from its unity and regularity as though it were unusual. Besides, there are two great cupolas at Rome, and if we take dome in this sense we do not know to which he refers. "It is impossible to determine whether he refers to St. Peter's or the Pantheon" (Elwin).

Murray gives instances in the New English Dictionary of the use of the word to denote a cathedral church, from Addison, from the London Gazette of 1707, and from Hanway's Travels (1753). But he seems to be mistaken in saying that the word in this sense is obsolete; it is so used, for instance, by Browning, if we may quote

him as an authority.

1. 251. appear. This verb should be singular.

1. 257. conduct, management.

1. 261. lays, lays down.

1. 263. some subservient art, e.g. grammar, prosody, rhetoric.

1. 264. Still, ever.

1. 265. notions, conceptions, ideas. Here it seems to mean fancifully formed notions. Speaking of what he calls "mixed modes" (complex abstract ideas), Locke says: "And hence I think it is that these ideas are called 'notions', as if they had their original and constant existence in the thoughts of men rather than in the reality of things" (Essay, ii. 22, § 2).

1. 267. La Mancha's Knight, Don Quixote, the hero of Cervantes.

The passage referred to by Pope is not in the original book, but in the so-called Second Part of Don Quixote, published in 1614, a year before the true Second Part, under the name of the Licentiate Alfonso Fernandez de Avellaneda. The real author is unknown, though much elaborate guessing has been indulged in. Le Sage (d. 1747) translated and adapted it, and his version was rendered into English by Captain John Stevens, and published in 1705. In Bk. III, chap. x Don Quixote meets two scholars, one of whom tells him of a play he has in his head.

"But pray tell me, whether in your plays you stick close to

Aristotle's rules?"

"No, truly," said the Bachelor, "I do not."

"So much the worse," answer'd Don Quixote, "for Aristotle is an infallible oracle on that point. Not to follow his rules is to swerve from Nature and reason; and that is the cause why strangers do not approve of our performances, which in all other respects are excellent."

"I own," quoth the Bachelor, "that most of our dramatic poets seem to make little account of Aristotle's rules. For my own part I like them very well; I never depart from them out of mere lightness, but ever follow them when they will suit with my plot; but to deal ingenuously, I do not pay so much deference to them, as to lose any surprising turn for their sake which cannot subsist with them."

"That turn must be cast away," quoth Don Quixote, interrupting him; "all must be sacrificed to the severe rules of that wise master. But let us come to your plot."

The Bachelor then tells the plot.

"This, sir, is the whole plot of my play."

"It is a very good one," answer'd the knight, "but I know not

whether you can make a regular play of it."
"I am satisfy'd you'll compass it," said the other scholar, "provided you omit the combat in the lists."

"Let him have a care of that," said Don Quixote, interrupting

him, "that is the best part of the plot."

"But, sir," quoth the Bachelor, "if you would have me adhere to Aristotle's rules, I must pass by the combat."

"Aristotle," reply'd the knight, "I grant was a man of parts; but his capacity was not unbounded; and in short, his authority does not extend over combats in the lists, which are above his rules. Would you suffer the Queen of Bohemia to perish? Or how can you clear her innocence? Believe me, the combat is the most honourable way: and besides, it will add such a grace to your play, that all the rules in the world must not stand in competition with it."

"Well, sir Knight," reply'd the Bachelor, "for your sake and for the honour of chivalry, I will not leave out the combat; and that it may appear the more glorious all the court of Bohemia shall be proud of it. But still one difficulty occurs, which is that our common theatres are not large enough for it."

"There must be one built a purpose," answer'd Don Quixote; "and, in a word, rather than leave out the combat the play had

better be acted in a field or plain."

1. 270. Dennis. John Dennis (1657-1734), a voluminous critic and poet. His writings include The Impartial Critic (1692), Remarks on Prince Arthur (Blackmore's epic, 1696), the Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry (1701), and the Grounds of Criticism in Poetry (1704). He had also written several tragedies, of which only one is remembered, and that because of Pope's nickname

(M 647)

in I. 585 of the present poem. He replied to Pope's unprovoked attack by publishing his Reflections upon an Essay upon Criticism (1711), which was followed by Remarks upon Mr. Pope's Homer (1717) and by Remarks upon the Rape of the Lock (1728). Dennis came to blows with many of the writers of the day, amongst others Rymer, Blackmore, Addison, and Jeremy Collier.

He was an acute critic. Like others critics of the age he thought more of verbal inconsistencies than of bigger faults, but he was more alive to certain of the deficiencies of the poetry of the time than

much greater writers, such as Addison, Pope, and Swift.

- 1. 276. unities. The famous dramatic unities of time, place, and action may be stated thus: (1) that the time represented as occupied by the action should not greatly exceed the time of representation on the stage, and be at most one day; (2) that the scene should not be changed, at any rate further than to places which the persons could easily reach in the interval between the acts; and (3) that the plot should deal with only one single catastrophe, the action must be one and entire, so that if any part be changed or omitted the whole will be changed or destroyed. The unities are often ascribed to Aristotle, but the third is the only one laid down by him as a canon of tragedy.
 - 1. 280. Stagirite. See note to l. 138.
- 1. 286. Curious, over-careful, over-refined. From Lat. curiosus, from cura.
- nice, over-refined, fastidious. From Lat. nescius, ignorant, foolish. Notice the rhyme caprice—nice, and compare ll. 273-74.
- 1. 289. Conceit, a far-fetched idea. From Lat. conceptum, something concerned, a thought. But the use was influenced by the employment of the Italian concetto to signify a brilliant thought, or a falsely glittering one.
- 1. 297. True Wit. Pope is here taking the word wit in a very limited sense. As Dr. Johnson says, "Pope's account of wit is undoubtedly erroneous; he depresses it below its natural dignity, and reduces it from strength of thought to happiness of language" (Lives of the Poets, Bohn, i. 21). See Introduction, p. lviii seq., above.
- 1. 299. convinc'd at sight. This seems to belong to the subject we. "Something whose truth we at once recognize, being at once convinced by it."
 - 1. 308. upon content, upon trust.
- I. 311. the prismatic glass. When a beam of sunlight falls through the sides of a prism it reappears as a band of coloured light. Newton first showed that in this process we have a true analysis of sunlight into rays of differing refrangibility. Pope does not make quite clear whether he is thinking of throwing the prismatic spectrum on to objects, or of looking through a prism at objects.

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1. 319. decent, becoming. (Lat. decere.) The altar is ordered by the canons of 1641 to have upon it a "decent carpet", that is, a becoming tapestry.

1. 323. several, separate, distinct. See note to 1. 66.

1. 324. Some by old words. Spenser had done this in his day, and Ben Jonson says of him, "Spenser, in affecting the ancients, writ no language". He warns us against tasting Gower or Chaucer before our judgments are confirmed, "lest falling too much in love with antiquity, and not apprehending the weight, [we] grow rough and barren in language only". Nowadays this love of archaic and obsolete language is seen in writers of the type of William Morris, especially in his prose sagas.

Pope quotes from Quintilian to the effect that to retain obsolete words is a kind of insolence; the supreme merit in speech is cleamess, and we should use antiquated words very sparingly.

(Quintil. I, c. vi.)

1. 328. Fungoso, a foolish character in Ben Jonson's Every Man out of His Humour, "one that revelled in his time, and follows the fashion afar off, like a spy". He is a tailor who imitates the clothes of the dandy, Fastidious Brisk.

1. 337. Numbers, verse. This use of the word is an imitation of the Latin.

1. 345. Tho' oft the ear. It is hardly necessary to call attention to the ingenious way in which Pope exemplifies in this passage the

various faults he is condemning.

Eighteenth-century writers disliked the coming together of two fully pronounced vowels. Such a meeting was called an hiatus, and its vowels were said to be open vowels. When one vowel occurred at the end of a word while the other began the next word, the former vowel was slurred over or contracted (synalepha), or suppressed (casura). See the passage from Pope's letter to Henry Cromwell given in Appendix I of this volume. Thus Dryden (1683) condemns Chapman's line:

"The army's plague, the strife of kings".

Between the first two words he says "there remains a most horrible ill-sounding gap". He goes on, "I cannot say that I have everywhere observed the rule of the synalepha, but wheresoever I have not it is a fault in sound. The French and the Italians have made it an inviolable precept in their versification; therein following the severe example of the Latin poets. Our countrymen have not yet reformed their poetry so far, but content themselves with following the licentious practice of the Greeks, who, though they sometimes use synalephas, yet make no difficulty, very often to sound one vowel upon another" (Dedication of the Third Miscellany, Scott's edit. xii. 58).

Pope quotes from Cicero, Ad Heren., lib. iv, i.e. from the work on Rhetoric going under Cicero's name (see note to l. 15 above), as follows:—"Fugiemus crebras vocalium concursiones, que vastam atque hiantem orationem reddunt".

1. 346. expletives, words put in to fill up the metre, as "do" in the next line. The idea is from Dryden. "He creeps along with ten little words in every line, and helps out his numbers with 'for', 'to', and 'unto', and all the pretty expletives he can find, till he drags them to the end of another line" (Essay of Dramatic Poesy, ed. Nichol Smith, p. 4). In the original edition of the Essay on Criticism Pope had many such expletives, which he subsequently omitted. E.g. 1. 75 read, "Which still presides, yet never does appear"; 1. 92 read, "First learned Greece just precepts did indite"; 1. 508, "Too much does wit from ignorance undergo"; 1. 675, "The Muses sure Longinus did inspire". Compare Appendix I.

1. 350. breeze. Wakefield points out that Pope's examples of rhymes actually occur in four consecutive lines of Hopkins' Translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses, book xi (published in his Poems,

1694):

"No tame nor savage beast dwells there: no breeze Shakes the still boughs, or whispers thro' the trees: Her easy streams with pleasing murmurs creep At once inviting and assisting sleep".

1. 356. Alexandrine, a line of twelve syllables accented on the even syllables (iambic six-measure), frequently used by seventeenthcentury poets to vary the monotony of heroic couplet. Compare Appendix I.

1. 361. Denham. Sir John Denham (1615-1669), the author of the tragedy, The Sophy (1641), and of the topographical poem, Cooper's Hill. His reputation was out of all proportion to his merit, and he is one of the many writers whose names are only now kept alive by books on the history of Literature.

Waller. Edmund Waller (1606 1687), the author of many lyrical poems. One of his larger works is the Battle of the Summer Islands, a mock heroic poem of a few hundred lines of heroic couplet. Some of his lyrical poems have real charm, such as the

Go, lovely rose, given in Palgrave's Golden Treasury.

After referring to ll. 124-129, Dennis says: "He who is familiar with Homer and intimate with Virgil, will not be extremely affected either with the sweetness of Waller or the force of Denham. If I were to recommend a British poet to one who has been habituated to Homer and Virgil, I would for the honour of my country and of my own judgment advise him to read Milton, who very often equals both the Grecian and the Roman in their extraordinary qualities, and sometimes surpasses them" (Reflections upon a Late Rhapsody, p. 17).

1. 365. The sound must seem. From Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse:

"The sound is still a comment on the sense".

Compare Appendix I.

1. 366. Soft is the strain. This and several other lines following are suggested by passages in Vida's *Poetics*, Bk. iii, and Pope duly points out his obligations in his notes. The present comes from 403 seq.:

"Tum si læta canunt, hilari quoque carmina vultu Incedunt, lætumque sonant haud segnia verba".

Lines 368-69 are suggested by Vida, iii. 388 seq.:

"Tunc longe sale saxa sonant, tunc et freta ventis Incipiunt agitata tumescere; littore fluctus Illidunt rauco atque refracta remurmurat unda Ad scopulos", &c.

1. 370. Ajax strives. "Homer mentions two occasions in which Ajax threw stones, but in neither case is there anything laboured in the Greek, nor in Pope's English version is the sound 'an echo to the sense'" (West). Mr. West's references are, however, wrong. The passages in Pope's *Hiad* are vii. 320 seq., and xiv. 471 seq.

This passage is suggested by, and is almost a translation of,

Vida, iii. 415 seq.:

"Siquid geritur molimine magno Adde moram, et pariter tecum quoque verba laborent Segnia".

1. 372. Camilla. The female warrior described at the end of Bk, vii of the Aeneid (803 seq.):

"Last from the Volscians fair Camilla came And led her warlike troops, a warrior dame: Unbred to spinning, in the loom unskilled She chose the nobler Pallas of the field. Mixed with the first, the fierce virago fought, Sustained the toils of arms, the danger sought; Outstripped the winds in speed upon the plain, Flew o'er the fields nor hurt the bearded grain; She swept the seas, and as she skimmed along, Her flying feet unbathed on billows hung."

(Dryden's trans.)

1. 374. Timotheus. See Alexander's Feast for the allusions in Il. 374-83. A celebrated flute-player of Thebes, who charmed the ears of Alexander the Great; and is perhaps confused by Dryden and Pope with an earlier musician named Timotheus (died about 357 B.C.), a native of Miletus, who enjoyed the greatest popularity not only in Athens but in Ephesus and other cities. This carlier

Timotheus improved the lyre, and increased the number of strings to eleven. He is said to have died in Macedonia, but this was before the birth of Alexander.

- 1. 376. the son of Libyan Jove. Alexander claimed to be the son of Ammon, the Libyan Zeus.
 - 1. 389. nauseate, feel nauseated at.
- 1. 391. admire. Pope uses the word here with somewhat of the meaning of the Latin admirari, to wonder at, to be dazzled by. Thus Horace:
 - "Nil admirari prope res est una, Numici, Solaque, quæ possit facere et servare beatum". —Epist. I. vi. 1 seq.

In the modern sense of the word, nothing can be more misleading than Pope's line. The capacity for genuine admiration is never found in the real fool.

- 1. 394. Some ... some. Some critics ... other critics.
- 1. 395. The Ancients only. For the War of the Ancients and Moderns, see Macaulay's essay on Sir William Temple (Essays, Student's Edit., pp. 463-67). The controversy which had originated in France was transplanted into England by an essay of Temple's (1692), in which he maintained the superiority of the ancient classical writers over the modern. William Wotton, a man of precocious ability, replied in his Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning (1694), and Bentley, Atterbury, and Swift, as well as less famous writers, were drawn into the fierce warfare which followed.
- 1. 397. all are damn'd beside. Pope was nominally a Roman Catholic, and he sincerely disliked noisy Puritans and self-assertive Deists. But he was deeply touched with the latitudinarian and anticlerical spirit of the times to which he belonged. Compare lines 396–97. 428, 440–47, 693–96.

In a letter to Bishop Atterbury (Nov. 20, 1717) he expresses perhaps more seriously than in any other place his religious attitude. "After all, I verily believe your lordship and I are both of the same religion, if we were thoroughly understood by one another; and that all honest and reasonable Christians would be so, if they did but talk enough together every day, and had nothing to do together but to serve God and live in peace with their neighbours. . . I hope all churches and governments are so far of God as they are rightly understood and rightly administered, and when they are, or may be wrong, I leave it to God alone to amend or reform them; which whenever He does it must be by greater instruments than I am. I am not a Papist, for I renounce the temporal invasions of the Papal power, and detest their arrogated authority over princes and states. I am a Catholic in the strictest sense of the word."

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In the Essay on Man, Ep. iii. ll. 305-10, he uses more rhetorical and less guarded language:

"For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right;
In faith and hope the world will disagree,
But all mankind's concern is charity:
All must be false that thwart this one great end:
And all of God that bless mankind or mend".

- 1. 399. but on a part to shine. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (St. Matt. v. 45).
- 1. 400. sublimes, to improve, to refine. A term used in chemistry, meaning to reduce a solid matter to a vapour and then let it solidify again in a fine powder.
- 1. 409. the Town, the fashionable world. "What is a greater pedant than a mere man of the town? Bar him the play-houses, a catalogue of the reigning beauties, and an account of a few fashionable distempers that have befallen him, and you strike him dumb. How many a pretty gentleman's knowledge lies all within the verge of the court? He will tell you the names of the principal favourites, repeat the shrewd sayings of a man of quality, whisper an intrigue that is not yet blown upon by common fame; or, if the sphere of his observations is a little larger than ordinary, will perhaps enter into all the incidents, turns, and revolutions in a game of ombre". (Spectator, No. 105).
- l. 415. Quality, aristocracy, noble birth. See the above quotation from Addison.
 - 1. 419. hackney, let out for hire.
 - 1. 422. fault. See note to 1. 170.
 - 1. 428. Schismatics. The accent is on the first syllable.

plain believers. Pope originally printed "dull believers", but changed the word to meet the objections of his somewhat scandalized Roman Catholic friends.

1. 440. School-divines, theologians learned in the scholastic theology. During the Middle Ages a great system of philosophy and theology grew up based on Aristotle and on the Christian Fathers, but differing from both in so far as it was thoroughly systematized and worked out into great detail. Peter Lombard, Bishop of Paris (died 1164), was one of the first of the great "school-divines"; he was known as the Master of the Sentences from a book of sentences (Sententice, or Opinions) in which he summarized the teaching of the Fathers. This book very largely influenced subsequent theologians, and was regarded as the most authoritative work on the subject until the publication of the Summa Theologic of St. Thomas Aquinas.

- 1. 444. Scotists and Thomists, the followers of two rival systems of theology, taught by Duns Scotus (d. 1308) and St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274). The former, an Englishman and an Oxford student, criticised many of the conclusions of the latter, and showed the influence of Platonic opinions as against the almost undeviating Aristotelianism of St. Thomas. The Scotists represented a less conservative tendency in theology, and a disposition to rationalize which seemed to the Thomists to savour of unorthodoxy.
- 1. 445. Duck-lane. This was a lane in Smithfield, running down from the Barbican. It was a favourite resort for second-hand booksellers.

"Some country squire to Lintot goes, Inquires for Swift in verse and prose. Says Lintot, 'I have heard the name; He died a year ago'. 'The same!' He searches all the shop in vain. 'Sir, you may find him in Duck-lane.'"

-Swift, On the Death of Dr. Swift.

- 1.449. The current folly proves the ready wit. To appropriate the literary fashion of the moment is regarded as the proof of genius.
 - II. 450-51. safe—laugh. Note the rhyme.
- 1. 459. Parsons. No doubt Collier and Milbourn are meant. Jeremy Collier (d. 1726) was a Nonjuring clergyman who attacked the dramatists of the day, particularly Dryden and Congreve, in his Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage (1698). Compare Macaulay's account of Collier's attack in his essay on the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration. For Dryden's reference to Collier and Milbourn see Globe edition of Dryden (pp. 505-506). Specimens of Milbourn's criticism may be found in Johnson's Life of Dryden (ed. Ryland, p. 93 seg.).

Beaus. Among the beaus who attacked Dryden are George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. The former wrote the Rehearsal (1671), the latter procured a cowardly and brutal attack on the poet in Covent Garden (1679).

1. 463. Blackmores. Sir Richard Blackmore (d. 1729), a physician and poet who was the constant butt of the wits of his day. His first poem (Prince Arthur) was produced when he was about forty-five. His work seems to have enjoyed some popularity, and to have secured the approval of Locke as well as of Johnson.

Milbourns. The Reverend Luke Milbourn (d. 1720), rector of Yarmouth, who had formerly issued a translation of Virgil's Aeneid, Bk. I, appeared in 1698 as a critic of Dryden's version. "His own translations of Virgil have answered his criticisms on mine. . . . His account of my manners and my principles is

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of a piece with his cavils and his poetry; and so I have done with him for ever" (Dryden, Preface to Fables).

- l. 465. Zoilus. A critic who lived at Amphipolis, in Macedonia, in the time of Philip, the father of Alexander. He attacked Homer, and apparently Plato and Isocrates. The name is properly a trisyllable (Zō-ilus).
- 1. 479. Patriarch-wits. Pope has in mind the extraordinary longevity of the ancient patriarchs as recorded in Genesis, chap. v.
- 1. 483. as Chaucer is. Probably Chaucer is now more widely read than Dryden. It must not be thought that Pope despised Chaucer; like Dryden he greatly admired him, and modernized several of his poems (Temple of Fame, January and May, Wife of Bath). Compare above, 1. 383; two such similar verses about Dryden only a hundred lines apart are a defect in the poem.
- 1. 485. Idea, image. Trisyllable. Pope was himself something of an artist. He studied painting for a short time under the fashionable portrait-painter Jervas.
- 1. 494. mistaken things, things on which an exaggerated value is set. Wit in this line seems to mean literary genius.
- 1.506. the virtuous shun. This is far from clear. Most commentators evade the difficulty. Mr. West suggests that "perhaps Pope had in view the system of abject dedications to lordly patrons".
- 1.507. by knaves undone, ruined by malicious persons who wilfully misrepresent it. Warburton ridiculously explains "the poet would insinuate a common but shameful truth, that men in power, if they got into it by liberal arts, generally left wit and science to starve".
- 1. 509. commence its foe, to acquire the character of its foe. "To commence bachelor" is a phrase still used at the universities.
 - 1. 511. such...who. See note to 1. 15.
- l. 521. sacred lust of praise. "In the margin of the manuscript", says Elwin, "Pope has written the passages of Virgil from which he took his expressions:

"Quid non mortalia pectora cogis, Auri sacra fames."—Aeneid, iii. 56.

"Nec tibi regnandi veniat tam dira cupido."

-Georg., .. 37.

The former quotation shows us that sacred is here used in the sense of devoted to the gods, and hence accursed (compare taboo).

1. 524. join. For the rhyme see note to ll. 187-188.

I. 533. sure. An adverb.

I. 536. easy Monarch, Charles II.

1. 538. Jilts rul'd the state, e.g. Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, and Louise de Querouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth.

statesmen farces writ, e.g. George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who wrote the *Rehearsal*, and Sir Charles Sedley, who wrote the *Mulberry Garden*.

1. 539. wits had pensions. Among those "wits" who got pensions or offices were Dryden, Butler (the author of *Hudibras*), and Cowley.

young Lords had wit, e.g. the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Rochester, the Earl of Dorset, the Earl of Mulgrave.

- 1.541. not a Mask. Ladies usually wore masks at the theatre at the beginning of Charles II's reign. Mr. Pepys, noticing that the fashion had begun to prevail, bought one for his wife in June, 1663. Later on they became the mark of dissolute characters, and at the time of Queen Anne had been dropped by respectable women.
- 1. 545. Socinus. Faustus Socinus (Fausto Sozzini), an Italian reformer who was more thorough in his negative criticism of the old faith than Luther and Calvin, and entirely denied the Divinity of Christ, the Atonement, original sin, and other essential doctrines. He died in 1604 in Poland.
- 1. 546. unbelieving priests. The extreme Latitudinarian or Broad Church divines. It has been suggested that Pope is here alluding to Bishop Burnet and Bishop White Kennet, who had very little love for Anglican orthodoxy.
- 1.548. their rights. This is ambiguous; it may mean "the rights of the priests over the laity", or (ironically) "the rights of the laity towards God".
 - 1. 551. admir'd, wondered. See note to 1. 391.
- 1. 552. Wit's Titans. The Titans waged war with the gods of Olympus. Pope no doubt refers to the Deists, men like James Toland, whose Christianity not Mysterious (1696) and Socinianism Truly Stated (1705) were attacks on historic Christianity on behalf of the Latitudinarians; and Matthew Tindal, whose Jacobitism, Perjury, and Popery (1710) would have done credit to Mr. Kensit or Sir William Harcourt. His Christianity as Old as Creation was not published till twenty years later. Compare the Dunciad, ii. 399:

"Toland and Tindal, prompt at priests to jeer".

- 1. 556. nice, over-subtle.
- l. 557. mistake an author into vice, misrepresent innocent minds and ideas as vicious.
- 1. 571. Critic. This is the word we now spell critique. Compare Steele's Tatler, No. 115, "I shall not fail to write a critic upon his

performance". Dr. Johnson spells it in the same way as Pope and Steele.

1. 577. That, i.e. good-breeding.

1. 585. Appius. John Dennis, the author of Appius and Virginia (1709). See note to 1. 270.

The word "tremendous" was a favourite one with Dennis, and so

is specially appropriate.

l. 588. to tax an Honourable fool, to censure an aristocratic fool. A nobleman had the right to take a degree at the university without examination.

Compare Pope's "Dulness is sacred in a sound divine". Notice

the careless rhyming of lines 584-89 and 592-93.

1. 593. fulsome, full-some, excessive, hence cloying.

l. 599. who can rail. An echo of a line by John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire.

"But who can rail so long as he can sleep?"

-Essay on Satire.

1. 603. Jades, wretched nags, unfit to ride.

- l. 610. Such shameless Bards we have. The reference is doubtless to William Wycherley, the dramatist (d. 1715), with whom Pope had just quarrelled (May, 1710) before the publication of the present work. Wycherley had been one of the most brilliant dramatists of the early part of Charles Second's reign, and produced his great comedies (Country Wife, Plain-Dealer, &c.) between 1671 and 1674. When Pope got to know him he was an elderly man, and had given up the pursuit of literary fame. But he still wrote verses, and submitted them to Pope for correction. When, years after (1735), Pope published his correspondence, he remodelled it so much as to give a false idea of the relations existing between them. Wycherley's letters to Pope, however, have been recovered, and we know that Pope did not exactly play the part of candid superior, as the reconstructed letters suggest. Wycherley's actual letters to Pope display, says Professor Courthope, "a natural consciousness of superiority to his correspondent as an inexperienced boy. Of Pope's letters to Wycherley we know no more than what he has chosen to publish; but from the terms in which Wycherley writes to him it is hardly likely that his critical censure was conveyed in a form of such uncompromising plainness as he would have us believe" (Pope's Works, v. 74).
- 1. 612. read, in a passive sense, possessed of reading. The "bookfull blockhead" has read the wrong books, or read the right ones ill.
- l. 617. Dryden's Fables down to Durfey's Tales. Dryden's Fables, published in 1700, was his last work. It consists of trans-

lations or modernizations of tales by Homer, Ovid, Boccaccio, and Chaucer, the most important part being from the two last-named writers. Johnson says it is the first example in English of this kind of composition—"what the Italians call *rifacimento*, a reno-

vation of ancient writers by modernizing their language".

Tom Durfey (d. 1723), a dramatist and writer of facetice. His collected pieces, Wit and Mirth, or Pills to Purge Melancholy (1719-20), occupy six volumes, and seem to have enjoyed much favour. He is called "Tom Durfey of facetious memory" by Addison, and got friendly and half-contemptuous puffs in the Tatler (No. 11) and in the Guardian (No. 67 and 82). "As my friend, after the manner of the old lyrics, accompanies his works with his own voice, he has been the delight of the most polite companies and conversations from the beginning of King Charles the Second's reign to our present times. Many an honest gentleman has got a reputation in his country by pretending to have been in company with Tom Durfey" (Guardiam, No. 67).

1. 619. Garth. Sir Samuel Garth (d. 1718), a fashionable physician and a wit. His Dispensary alluded to in the next line was a burlesque in six cantos, published in 1699, to celebrate the contest between the College of Physicians and the Society of Apothecaries. The College had set up a free dispensary, to provide medicine for the poor who had been seen without fee by members in the College. The Apothecaries' Company protested and opposed it, and secured the tacit assistance of the Corporation. The physicians raised a subscription among themselves to provide the poor with medicines, and Garth's poem was intended to enforce their project. "It was on the side of charity against the intrigues of interest, and of regular learning against licentious usurpation of medical authority, and was therefore naturally favoured by those who read and can judge of poetry" (Johnson). Seven editions were published in less than twenty years. Pope spoke of Garth in after years in very "Garth, Vanburgh, and Congreve", he said, enthusiastic terms. "were the three most honest-hearted, real good men of the poetical members of the Kit-Kat Club"; and he told Mr. Townley that Garth was "the most agreeable companion he ever knew".

Pope has the following note in a later edition: "A common slander at that time in prejudice of that deserving author. Our poet did him this justice when that slander most prevailed; and it is now (perhaps the sooner for this very verse) dead and forgotten." I do not think the slander could have had much currency, since no mention is made of it in the Biographia Britannica, or Dr. Johnson's account in the Lives of the Poets; or in later works, such as Chalmers,

and the Dictionary of National Biography.

1. 622. No place so sacred. Note the clumsy construction

1. 636. humanly. No original distinction between humanly and humanely.

1. 641. converse, conversation. Dryden uses the word as a substantive (with the accent, as here, on the second syllable) in his Epilogue to the Wild Gallant—

"And with these gallants he these ladies joins, To judge that language their converse refines".

645. Stagirite. See note to l. 138.

- 1. 648. Mæonian Star. Homer was anciently called Mæonides, either because his father was supposed to be named Mæon, or because the poet was born in Mæonia, an early name for Lydia in Asia Minor.
- 1. 651. Receiv'd his laws. This is a highly metaphorical way of putting the matter. Pope has already shown that he knew that the "laws" of critics are not imposed by sheer authority on poets, but are expressions of principles formed by critics to be observed by the best writers. See Il. 88–92.

Aristotle had "conquered nature" by his scientific and philosophical works (*Physics*, *Metaphysics*, the *History of Animals*, &c.); he "presided o'er wit" in his *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. In the judgment of most modern men of science, as well as philosophers, Aristotle was the greatest speculative genius the world has ever seen.

- 1. 653. Horace. Quintus Horatius Flaccus (d. 8 B.C.) wrote his Ars Poetica towards the close of his life. It is not a systematic exposition, but consists of more or less disconnected advice on composition. It is a familiar epistle and not a treatise.
- 1. 662. phlegm. The word phlegm has a curious history. It comes from the Greek $\phi \lambda \ell \gamma \mu a$, flame, through the Latin and the French; its primary meaning is extended to cover inflammation; then to the product of inflammation, the viscid mucus we now denote by the word. "Phlegm amongst the ancients signified a cold viscous humour, contrary to the etymology of the word, . . but amongst them there were two sorts of phlegm, cold and hot" (Arbuthnot, On Aliments, chapter vi). According to the ancient division, there were four temperaments severally answering to, and determined by, the preponderance of the four principal fluids (humours) of the body:—the sanguine (blood), the phlegmatic (phlegm), the choleric (cholē, or bile), and the melancholy (melancholē, or black bile). The phlegmatic man was supposed to be slow, tenacious, cold.

Pope spells the word fle'me. On the rhyme, see Introduction, p. lxiv.

1. 665. Dionysius of Halicarnassus. A Greek rhetorican and historian who lived at Rome in the time of Augustus, and wrote various critical works on Greek literature. He wrote on the poets from Homer to Euripides, and on the chief historians and orators, besides substantive works on oratory.

- 1. 667. Petronius. Titus (or Caius) Petronius was a licentious and profligate courtier of Nero. He was a man of ability, and was regarded (says Tacitus) at court as elegantice arbiter, the final judge in matters of taste. The only book which has come down to us as written by Petronius is of doubtful authenticity. It is not a critical work, but a kind of satirical romance; and Petronius, even if he wrote it, has no claim to be ranked with the other authorities mentioned by Pope in this part of the Essay. Petronius committed suicide in 66 A.D.
- 1. 669. Quintilian. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus was born in Spain, and died at the beginning of the second century A.D. He became a famous teacher of rhetoric, and was made consul by Domitian; while under Vespasian he received, as professor, a salary from the public exchequer. His work, the De Institutione Oratorice, has still a great reputation, both for its matter and its style.
- 1. 675. Longinus. Dionysius Cassius Longinus (d. 273 A.D.) was a Greek philosopher and rhetorician, who became tutor to Queen Zenobia at Palmyra. When Palmyra was taken by the Emperor Aurelian, Longinus was put to death. The treatise *De Sublimitate*, usually ascribed to him, is universally recognized as of the highest merit, and as approaching the great critical works of Aristotle more nearly than anything produced in the five or six centuries between.
- 1. 680. is himself that great Sublime he draws. This piece of tasteless hyperbole is appropriated from Boileau's preface to his translation of Longinus, "En parlant du sublime, il est lui-même très sublime".
- l. 686. Rome. Note the rhyme. In Julius Caesar (i. 2. 156) we have the play on words, "Now is it Rome indeed and room enough" (cf. also iii. 1. 288-89); but it is uncertain whether "Rome" was pronounced in Pope's time as we pronounce "doom", or "doom" as we pronounce "Rome".
- 1. 692. the Monks finish'd what the Goths begun. Pope's account of the rise of tyranny and superstition during the Middle Ages is purely imaginary. Modern students of history no longer look on the Middle Ages as a desert. They were not a period of destruction and ignorance, but of reconstruction and of partial but very real intellectual and artistic progress. The eighteenth century, whose pretentious admiration for classical art and literature was curiously divorced from any real Hellenic sympathy, was unable to see any beauty in medieval architecture, painting, or poetry. Goldsmith in his first essay (Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning, published in 1759) sums up his opinion of Dante in these words: "He addressed a barbarous people in a method suited to their apprehensions. . . . The truth is, he owes most of his reputation to the obscurity of the times in which he lived." And this expresses pretty fairly the attitude of the eighteenth century

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towards the thirteenth. The nineteenth has learnt, if not to comprehend, at least to admire buildings, philosophies, and poems which seemed to these pseudo-Greeks foolishness.

1. 693. Erasmus. Desiderius Erasmus (d. 1536), the greatest name of the Humanist Renascence in the north of Europe, was born about 1466 at Rotterdam. He was educated at Deventer and Gouda, and then lived at Paris for some years. He became a friend of Sir Thomas More and Dean Colet. He sympathized with the aims of those scholarly reformers who wished to simplify the credenda of religion, to go back to the early fathers and to throw over the scholastic theology, and to base theology on accurate scholarship. The brutalities and ignorance both of the Protestant and of the conservative party disgusted him. His chief works are his Moriæ Encomium (Praise of Folly), his Colloquia, his Ciceronianus, and his edition of the Greek text of the New Testament.

Pope's line suggests a faint reminiscence of Oldham's couplet:

"On Butler who can think without just rage, The glory and the scandal of the age?"

1. 697. Leo's golden days. The pontificate of Leo X (1513–1521) was the high noon of the Italian Renascence. He was the patron of all the arts. Raphael, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, and Titian were painting and designing; Ariosto, Bembo, Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and Sannazaro were busy with the pen. The actual occasion of Luther's revolt (as is well known) was the preaching of indulgences, which Leo X had permitted in order to raise funds for the erection of St. Peter's. To the half-pagan pontiff the outbreak seemed only a "squabble among the friars".

A rival claim may well be put in on behalf of his predecessor Julius II (1503-1513), but Julius's personal interests were almost entirely political and military, so that he strikes a somewhat discordant note in his own epoch. Leo was a figure more typical of

the Italian Renascence than the warrior pontiff.

1. 704. Raphael. Raphael Santi (1483–1520), usually considered in the eighteenth century as the greatest painter of the Italian or of any school. A pupil of Perugino, he came in 1505 under the full influence of the Florentine school. In 1508 he went to Rome, and in 1509 began the decoration of the great chambers in the Vatican. He also decorated, with the assistance of his pupils, the corridors of the vast palace; and he painted a great number of Madonnas and other easel pictures. For some years he was architect of St. Peter's, and in another branch of art he made the designs for the tapestries to be hung in the Sistine Chapel—the so-called Cartoons of Raphael. He was only thirty-seven when he died.

Vida. Marco Girolamo Vida, born at Cremona (d. 1566), was a theologian, and became Bishop of Alba. He was present at the Council of Trent; but is chiefly remembered as the writer of a few Latin poems which have had a great reputation for ease and charm. He wrote verses on the art of poetry, on the game of chess, and on silk-worms, and a heroic poem called the *Christiad* in six books, which won the eulogy of Milton. To-day his poems are unread and forgotten, even by those who care for modern Latin verse.

Pope acknowledges his indebtedness to Vida on several occasions

in his notes to the Essay. See Introduction, p. xlvi.

The description of the game of ombre in the Rupe of the Lock is avowedly in imitation and emulation of Vida's game of chess.

1. 708. Mantua. Virgil was born near Mantua; Vida, as we have seen, near Cremona. There is here an allusion to a line in Virgil's ninth *Ecloque*:

"Mantua, væ! miseræ nimium vicina Cremonæ"

("Mantua, alas! too near a neighbour to the unfortunate Cremona"). According to Warton, the special application had already been made by an English editor of Vida.

- 1. 709. by impious arms. This refers to the sack of Rome by the Constable de Bourbon in 1527. This event had a most important effect on the history of Europe; it helped to transfer the centre of the Humanist movement from Italy to Central Europe, and it gave a fatal blow to the political power and prestige of the Holy See at the moment when it stood face to face with a great religious revolt.
- 1. 714. Boileau. Nicholas Boileau Despreaux (d. 1711), the French poet and critic, who best represented the "correct" school. He wrote L'Art Poétique (1674), the mock heroic Lutrin (1674), and numerous odes and epistles, besides several critical works. Dryden and Pope, like most of their English contemporaries, refer in tones of reverence to the authority of the great Frenchman. He was the incarnation of the principles which they admired—force, sobriety, good sense, and classical taste.
- 1. 724. "Nature's chief Masterpiece." This is from the Essay on Poetry (1682), by John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, afterwards Duke of Buckinghamshire (d. 1721). He was the object of praise from Dryden as well as Pope, but his poetry has little merit. "Of this Essay which Dryden has exalted so highly, it may be justly said that the precepts are judicious, sometimes new, and often happily expressed. His verses are often insipid, but his memoirs are lively and agreeable; he had the perspicuity and elegance of an historian, but not the fire and fancy of a poet" (Johnson's Lives of the Poets, ii. 172, ed. Napier). Another remembered poem by Mulgrave is the Essay on Satire, which was ascribed to Dryden, and in which he seems to have had at any rate some share. It was for a couplet in this that "glorious John" was waylaid and beaten in Rose Street, Covent Garden, by the order of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester,

1. 725. Roscommon. Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon (d. 1685), produced a translation of Horace's Ars Poetica, and an Essay on Translated Verse. "He is, perhaps, the only correct writer in verse before Addison; and that if there are not so many or so great beauties in his compositions as in those of some of his contemporaries, there are at least fewer faults. Nor is this his highest praise; for Mr. Pope has celebrated him as the only moral writer of King Charles's reign:

"Unhappy Dryden! in all Charles's days Roscommon only boasts unspotted lays" (Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, i. 238, ed. Napier).

1. 729. Walsh. William Walsh (d. 1708), who lived at Atherley, in Worcestershire, a country gentleman and a man of fashion, who wrote a few poems, of little charm and less vitality, of which, indeed, even the very names are forgotten by most students. He owes his small niche in the temple of fame to the fact that he encouraged Pope when Pope was a boy of fifteen. "He used to encourage me much, and used to tell me that there was one way left for excelling, for though we had several great poets we never had one great poet that was correct; and he desired me to make that my study and my aim" (Spence's Anecdotes, p. 212, ed. 1858).

Walsh wrote a Dialogue concerning Women (To Eugenia), Æsculapius or the Hospital for Fools, in imitation of Lucian (both in prose), some sprightly prose Letters Amorous and Gallant to an imaginary lady, and some dreary pastorals and unmelodious songs. His reputation as a critic is somewhat of a mystery. Dryden, who in 1691 furnished a laudatory Preface to the Dialogue concerning Women in 1697, speaks of him as "the best critic of our nation in

his time" (Postscript to Dryden's Virgil).

APPENDIX I

PART OF A LETTER FROM POPE TO HENRY CROMWELL, Esquire

NOVEMBER 25, 1710

Your mention in this and your last letter of the defect in numbers of several of our poets, puts me upon communicating a few thoughts, or rather doubts, of mine on that head, some of which it is likely I may have hinted to you formerly in conversation: but I will here put together all the little niceties I can recollect in the compass of my observation.

I. As to the hiatus, it is certainly to be avoided as often as possible; but on the other hand, since the reason of it is only for the sake of the numbers, so if, to avoid it, we incur another fault against their smoothness, methinks the very end of that nicety is destroyed: as when we say for instance,

But th' old have int'rest ever in their view,

to avoid the hiatus in

The old have int'rest.

Does not the ear in this place tell us, that the hiatus is smoother, less

constrained, and so preferable to the cæsura?

2. I would except against all expletives in verse, as do before verbs plural, or even too frequent use of did or does, to change the termination of the rhyme; all these being against the usual manner of speech, and mere fillers-up of unnecessary syllables.

3. Monosyllabic lines, unless very artfully managed, are stiff,

languishing, and hard.

4. The repeating of the same rhymes within four or six lines of each other, which tire the ear with too much of the like sound.

5. The too frequent use of Alexandrines, which are never graceful but when there is some majesty added to the verse by them, or where there cannot be found a word in them but what is absolutely needful.

6. Every nice ear must, I believe, have observed that in any smooth English verse of ten syllables, there is naturally a pause

either at the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllables; as for example, Waller:-

At the fifth: Where-e'er thy navy | spreads her canvass wings. At the fourth: Homage to thee | and peace to all she brings. At the sixth: Like tracks of leverets | in morning snow.

Now I fancy, that to preserve an exact harmony and variety, none of these pauses should be continued above three lines together, without the interposition of another; else it will be apt to weary the ear with one continued tone—at least it does mine.

7. It is not enough that nothing offends the ear, that the verse be, as the French call it, coulant; but a good poet will adapt the very sounds, as well as words, to the things he treats of. So that there is, if one may express it so, a style of sound; as in describing a gliding stream, the numbers should run easy and flowing; in describing a rough torrent or deluge, sonorous and swelling; and so of the rest. This is evident everywhere in Homer and Virgil, and nowhere else that I know of to any observable degree. The following examples will make this very plain, which I have taken from Vida:—

Molle viam tacito lapsu per levia radit.
Incedit tardo molimine subsidendo.
Luctantes ventos, tempestatesque sonoras.
Immenso cum precipitans ruit oceano nox.
Telum imbelle sine ictu, conjecit.
Tolle moras, cape saxa manu, cape robora, pastor.
Ferte citi flammas, date tela, repellite pestem.

This, I think, is what very few observe in practice, and is undoubtedly of wonderful force in imprinting the image on the reader. We have one excellent example of this in our language, Mr. Dryden's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, entitled *Alexander's Feast, or The Power of Music.*

I ask your pardon for this tedious letter, and expect a long one in answer to these notions concerning versification. I expect also the voyage of Ovid's mistress with more impatience than Ovid himself could her return. The other journey you speak of—mine to London—must yet be deferred; but though I desire nothing more than to enjoy the happiness of your conversation, yet I have too much conscience to let mine cost you anything but your patience. I am heartily sorry for poor Mr. Wycherley's illness, and it is to his being long indisposed that I partly attribute his chagrin. I wish he may enjoy all the happiness he desires, though he has been the occasion of my enjoying much less than I did formerly. I look upon your kindness to me as doubly engaging at this time, and shall never cease to acknowledge it, or to profess myself, dear Sir, your most real friend and most humble servant.

APPENDIX II

EXTRACTS FROM DENNIS'S "REFLECTIONS UPON A LATE RHAPSODY ENTITLED AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM" (1711).

"I am inclined to believe that it was writ by some young, or some raw author, for the following reasons. First, he discovers in every page a sufficiency that is far beyond his little ability; and hath rashly undertaken a task which is infinitely above his force. . . . Secondly, while this little author struts and affects the dictatorian air, he plainly shows that at the same time he is under the rod, and that while he pretends to give laws to others, he is himself a pedantic slave to authority and opinion. . . . But a third infallible mark of a young author is that he hath done in this Essay what schoolboys do by their exercises, he hath borrow'd both from living and dead, and particularly from the authors of the two famous Essays upon Poetry and Translated Verse; but so borrow'd, that he seems to have the very reverse of Midas's noble faculty. For as the coarsest and the dullest metals were upon the touch of that Lydian monarch immediately changed into fine gold, so the finest gold, upon this author's handling it, in a moment loses both its lustre and its weight, and is immediately turn'd to lead. A fourth thing that shews him a young man, is the not knowing his own mind and his frequent contradictions of himself. His title seems to promise an essay upon criticism in general, which afterwards dwindles to an essay upon criticism in poetry. And after all, he is all along giving rules, such as they are, for writing rather than judging. . . . A fifth sign of his being a young author is his being almost perpetually in the wrong.

. . . Whenever we find a simile, the first line of it is like a warning piece to give us notice that something extraordinary false or foolish is to follow. . . . But what most shows him a very young author is, that with all these faults and this weakness he has the insolence of a hero, and is a down-right bully of Parnassus, who is every moment thund'ring out, Fool, Sot, Fop, Coxcomb, Blockhead. . . . Dennis attributed to the influence of the Italian opera the exis-

tence of Pope's Essay on Criticism. "'Tis now almost seven years since I happen'd to say one morning to a certain person distinguish'd

by merit and quality, that wherever the Italian opera had come, it had driven out poetry from that nation, and not only poetry but the very taste of poetry and of all the politer arts." And he regards the Essay on Criticism and the appreciation it has met with as "a most notorious instance of this depravity of genius and taste". "I will not deny", says the candid Dennis, "that there are two or three passages in it with which I am not displeas'd, but", he hastens to add, "what are two or three passages as to the whole?" "The thoughts, expressions, and numbers of this Essay are for the most part but very indifferent, and indifferent and execrable in poetry are all one."

The ambiguity in the word wit did not escape the glance of Dennis. "What does he mean by acquir'd wit? Does he mean genius by the word wit, or conceit and point? If he means genius, that is certainly never to be acquir'd. But if by wit he means conceit and point, those are things that ought never to be in poetry, unless by chance sometimes in the epigram, or in comedy, where it is proper to the character and the occasion; and ev'n in comedy it ought always to give place to humour, and ev'n to be lost and absorb'd in that."

"This extraordinary proceeding of borrowing and railing puts me in mind of a passage in Mr. Cowley:

'Tis now become the frugal fashion Rather to hide than pay the obligation; Nay, wrongs and outrages we do, Lest men should think we owe'.

But the men of quality, as they want not the discernment, will have the satisfaction to see, that as there is a great deal of venom in this little gentleman's temper, Nature has very wisely corrected it with a great deal of dulness.

> 'His rankest libels lull asleep his foes, As viper's blood in treacle makes us doze.'

As there is no creature in Nature so venomous, there is nothing so stupid and so impotent as a hunch-back'd toad; and a man must be very quiet and very passive, and stand still, to let him fasten his teeth and his claws, or be surpriz'd sleeping by him, before that animal can have any power to hurt him."

"For his acquaintance he names Mr. Walsh. I had the good fortune to know Mr. Walsh very well; who was a learned, candid, judicious gentleman. But he had by no means the qualification which this author reckons absolutely necessary to a critic; it being certain that Mr. Walsh was, like this essayer, a very indifferent poet; but he was a man of a very good understanding, in spite of his being

a beau. He lov'd to be well dress'd, as Dorimant says, and thought it no disparagement to his understanding; and I remember a little young gentleman, with all the qualifications which we have found to be in this author, whom Mr. Walsh used sometimes to take into his company as a double foil to his person, and his capacity. It has been observed that of late years a certain spectre exactly in the shape of that little gentleman, has haunted a certain ancient wit, and has been by the people of Covent Garden styl'd his evil genius. For it hath been extremely remarkable, that while that spectre hath haunted that ancient wit, he has never been able to write or talk like himself: which has by no means happen'd by any decay of his natural parts, but by the wonderful pow'r of magic. For as soon as the dumb conjuror has been employ'd to lay the spectre for three or four months, either in the midst of the Red Sea, or the middle of Windsor Forest, the old gentleman has strait been his own man as perfectly

as ever he was in his life.

"And now if you have a mind to inquire between Sunning Hill and Ockingham, for a young, squab, short gentleman, with the forementioned qualifications, an eternal writer of amorous pastoral madrigals, and the very bow of the god of Love, you will be soon directed to him. And pray, as soon as you have taken a survey of him, tell me whether he is a proper author to make personal reflections on others; and tell him if he does not like my person, 'tis because he is an ungrateful creature, since his conscience tells him, that I have been always infinitely delighted with his: so delighted, that I have lately drawn a very graphical picture of it, but I believe I shall keep the Dutch piece from ever seeing the light, as a certain old gentleman in Windsor Forest would have done by the original, if he durst have been half as impartial to his own draught as I have been to mine. This little author may extol the ancients as much and as long as he pleases, but he has reason to thank the good gods that he was born a modern. For had he been born of Grecian parents, and his father by consequence had by law had the absolute disposal of him, his life had been no longer than that of one of his poems, the life of half a day. Instead of setting his picture to show, I have taken a keener revenge, and exposed his intellectuals, as duly considering that, let the person of a gentleman of his parts be never so contemptible, his inward man is ten times more ridiculous; it being impossible that his outward form, tho' it should be that of downright monkey, should differ so much from human shape, as his immaterial unthinking part does from human understanding. How agreeable it is to be in a libel with so much good company as I have been, with two great monarchs, two mighty nations, and especially the people of quality of Great Britain, and this libel composed by a little gentleman who has writ a panegyric upon himself! Which panegyric, if it was not writ with judgment, yet was it publish'd with discretion, for it was publish'd in Mr. W---'s name; so that by this wise proceeding, he had the benefit of the encomium, and Mr. W — had the scandal of the poetry: which it brought upon him to such a degree that 'tis ten to one if ever he recovers the reputation of a good versifyer. And thus for the present I take my leave of you and of this little critic and his book; a book throughout which Folly and Ignorance, those brethren so lame and so impotent, do ridiculously at one and the same time look very big and very dull, and strut, and hobble check by jowl with their arms on kimbo, being led and supported and bully-back'd by that blind Hector, Impudence. I am, Sir,

"Yours, &c."



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